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ENIZELOS AND THE WAR.

ETCH OF PERSONALITIES & POLITICS.

BY

CRAWFURD PRICE.

AUTHOR of "LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS."

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A Sketch of Personalities and Politics

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CRAWFURD PRICE

AUTHOR OF "THE BALKAN COCKPIT," "LIGHT ON THE BALKAN DARKNESS," ETC.

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PREFACE

I HAVE compiled this sketch of personalities and politics in order to meet the very widespread desire to know more of the developments which have led up to the present extraordinary situation in Greece, and I am hopeful that it will assist the public to a better understanding of the political evolution which culminated in the departure of M. Venizelos for Crete and Salonika.

In principle, I have limited my digressions to those cases where I have considered it desirable to guide the reader to a correct appreciation of cause and effect, and the several references to Entente diplomacy have been included—and necessarily included—rather because its action was an important factor in the problem under consideration, than from any desire to add to the chorus of criticism evoked by its failure.

Since we are still in the midst of armed conflict, there are some parts of the story which I have left untold; but their exclusion in no way affects the general argument. There are other disclosures which I would, perhaps, have suppressed; but they have been made public in Athens, and there can

be no logical objection to acquainting the people of this country with facts that are known alike to our friends and our enemies. I have confined myself to M. Venizelos's own lucid explanation of the "invitation" to Salonika, instead of proceeding to a *résumé* of the diplomatic documents concerned. Similarly, in the matter of the Russian objection to Greece's participation in the Dardanelles expedition, I have said no more than has already been published by M. Jean Dragoumis in the Athens *Revue Politique.*

The manuscript of this book was dictated during the last days of October and the first week of November. Since then much interesting news has been telegraphed from Athens, all of which lends confirmation to the information contained herein. We have received additional evidence that the Greek authorities were a party to the Germano-Bulgarian occupation of Fort Rupel, and have learned that the proposal for intervention put forward by the Kalogeropoulos Ministry at least offered a basis for negotiation.

One cannot but regret that it has not been found possible to employ the resources of the Entente to restore national unity in Greece. In their note of June 21st the Powers clearly indicated that they considered it their right and duty to restore Constitutional Government. *Force majeure* prevented the holding of new elections, and, this being the case, it is a question whether it would not have been wiser in the best interests of the Allies,

Greece, and King Constantine himself, to have insisted upon the dissolution of a Chamber which we stated "represents only a fraction of the Electorate," and its replacement by the Parliament which we insinuated was unconstitutionally dissolved by His Majesty in the summer of 1915. This would have necessitated strong action; but it could probably have been accomplished by the application of measures less rigorous than those which have since been taken against the Greek State for objects much less valuable. The present anomaly will have to be cleared up sooner or later; and it is improbable that there can be a voluntary reconciliation between King Constantine and M. Venizelos, or that the existing *status quo* in Greece can continue after the war.

If we are sincere in our devotion to the causes of freedom, justice and righteousness, then this Venizelist movement is one which ought to receive our unstinted support and full official acknowledgment. If we are determined in our intention to crush militarism in Europe, then it is illogical for us to support any offshoot of it in the Balkans.

C. P.

LONDON,
November 15th, 1916.

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VENIZELOS AND THE WAR

CHAPTER I

ELEUTHERIOS VENIZELOS

FIFTY-TWO years ago, in the little Cretan village of Murniaes, and in what we should regard as humble circumstances, there was born the greatest statesman that modern Greece has known. The village priest christened him Eleutherios—"Liberty"—and it would seem that he was destined by an unseen hand to play a decisive part, not only in the struggle for the liberation of Hellas, but in the freeing of Christendom from the scourge of Prussian militarism. His life has been one persistent struggle in freedom's cause. At the early age of twenty-three he had commenced to free Crete from Ottoman rule; in 1910 he freed Greece from the political harpies and corrupt officials who infested its politics and administration; his administration freed Salonika in 1912, and Kavalla in 1913. He longed to free Bulgarian Thrace and Hellenic Asia Minor. Now he has once more donned the cloak of revolution in order to free Greek

Macedonia from the Bulgars and the Greek kingdom from despotism.

Venizelos's father intended him for a commercial career, but his own taste was for law; and, proceeding to Athens, he studied at the University, and returned to Crete a fully-fledged barrister at the age of twenty-two. He seemed to have been born for a political life, for the following year he was elected a member of the Cretan Assembly, and instantly became leader of the Liberal Party, then in majority.

The entry of this young and striking figure into the Cretan imbroglio speedily raised the question to a European issue. The hindrance to a satisfactory solution of a Greek political problem was not then King Constantine but Abdul Hamid, and the Powers sought one unsatisfactory compromise after another, until finally, in 1896, revolution broke out and Venizelos went to the hills as a revolutionary leader. In 1897, Britain, France and Russia intervened in order to restore peace to the island, and established Prince George of Greece, King Constantine's brother, as High Commissioner presiding over a National Assembly. Venizelos was never content with this temporary expedient. He wanted complete union with Greece, whereas Prince George favoured the introduction of a more or less autocratic system. This ultimately led to marked friction with Prince George and the Greek Royal Family, and the resentment of the latter at the fact that the Cretan

eventually succeeded in driving His Royal Highness from Crete has never really died down, and is one of the root causes of the present antagonism.

Cretan unity with Greece was finally attained in 1912, as a result of the defeat of Turkey in the first Balkan war. But in the meantime Greece herself had been in the throes of a peaceful revolution. The army had become a quasi-political organisation, corruption was rampant in the State service, and there sprang up a Military League, whose open object was to purify the political life of the country, but whose secret inclination was to get rid of the reigning Royal Family, King George and his sons having been made the scapegoats for every misfortune that had visited the land since the disaster of 1897. The party organised by the Military League, which quickly gained complete ascendency, looked for a leader, and the unanimous choice fell upon Venizelos. Invited to Athens in 1909, he had a magnificent reception, and was put forward as the hope of the nation.

During the past year the anti-Venizelist Press has insisted on representing the Liberal leader as bent upon the destruction of the monarchy. I do not think this allegation can be justified. The whole political record of M. Venizelos bears evidence to the contrary. When the Military League first called him to the capital many of his friends urged him to summon a National Assembly, with a

view to the abolition of the dynasty. He refused these suggestions with such vigour that they were at once abandoned by his immediate entourage. But later on, when the Cretan addressed a great meeting in Constitution Square, his first reference to the "Revisionist" character of the new Assembly was met with loud cries of "Constituent"—the reason being that a "Constituent" Assembly would have framed a new set of laws destined to humiliate the Crown as a preliminary to its abolition. M. Venizelos faced his audience squarely, and repeated the word "Revisionist" with such firmness that he quickly carried his point. He afterwards settled the matter by advising his leading partisans that any repetition of the demand for a "Constituent" Assembly would precipitate his immediate return to Crete. A few months later he reinstated the exiled Princes in the army, and if Constantine is King of Greece to-day, he holds office in large measure thanks to his present adversary.

M. Venizelos shares the opinion of many students of Greek politics that his country can best be governed by a monarchy, but he finds his ideal of kingship in England, not in Germany. "Greece has need of a monarchy," he told me in July of this year, "but her king must be a constitutional ruler, not a despot. The establishment of an absolutist *régime* is entirely out of keeping with the temperament of the Hellenic people."

The year 1910 saw Venizelos elected Prime

Minister of Greece, when he quickly set about the cleansing of the Augean stables. He banished State corruption, brought the administration of the country up to a very fair level of excellence, reorganised the army with the assistance of a French mission, and the navy with the assistance of a British mission. He restored the prestige of King George, and brought back the present King and placed him at the head of the army.

His next stroke of genius was the participation of Greece in the Balkan League, the treaty with Bulgaria being speedily followed by a declaration of war against Turkey. It is well known that the dynasty was not entirely favourable to this combination, but King George respected the desires of his Government, and the judgment of the statesman was speedily vindicated by the capture of Salonika. The second Balkan war, in which Greece shared the honours with Serbia, added further territories, and M. Venizelos saw the kingdom practically doubled in two years—a result due to his statesmanship, the military ability of King Constantine and his Staff, and the patient labours of the French and British missions.

Truly, Venizelos is a remarkable man—a man who seems to be gifted with a dual nature. The Premier you meet in society—the statesman who is an outstanding figure in European politics—is hardly compatible with the revolutionary leader of the Cretan hills, who is credited with being one of the finest revolver

shots in Europe. It is only when you get him with his back to the wall, or roused to anger against injustice, or combating interference with the freedom of men or nations, that you see sparks from the fires of enthusiasm for God and humanity that burn ever brightly within him.

Nature has well fitted him to be a chief among his fellows. He has all the pointed eloquence of a Lloyd George (whom he resembles also in other respects), the enticing, almost ethereal, charm of a R. J. Campbell, and the passionate force of a Welsh Revivalist. Watch him handle a crowd. There is no wild waving of the arms, no theatrical trick of oratory; but he folds the audience to him, as it were, tells them what he thinks (not necessarily what they want), rouses them to decision, and sends them away convinced that this man can point the road to the realisation of their national aims and ambitions.

See him in private. He has a winning smile, worth untold gold, that disarms his critics, and a gift of persuasion that generally seals his victory. Regard him in diplomacy. He is frank and honest, and believes in putting his cards on the table. He has a clear vision that looks far ahead, an unfailing memory, and one of those keen, brilliant minds that make their decisions quickly and rarely regret them. Finally, he has luck, luck so persistent as to warrant a belief that, even at this eleventh hour, he will be able to save Greece from utter disaster.

Being human, Venizelos has his faults; but they, like his mistakes, are singularly few. One might, perhaps, chide him for a too liberal distribution of his confidence, and he is accused of being too impetuous; but as to this, history alone can decide, and meantime it is working in his favour. Certain it is that he has a capacity for making staunch friends and vicious enemies, for while there are few sacrifices which he cannot demand of his admirers, there are equally few lengths to which his adversaries will not go to satisfy their hatred.

In July 1916 it was my privilege to spend a short holiday with M. Venizelos at Loutraki, a little thermal station on the shores of the Gulf of Corinth and opposite the town of that name. He went to Loutraki to rest awhile in preparation for the stress and turmoil of the then approaching electoral campaign. Rest, indeed! No morning's mail brought him less than a hundred letters, deputations of priests and publicans, saints and sinners, commenced to arrive before breakfast, and continued in day-long succession. There were newspapers—Greek and European—to be read, articles for his own journal, the *Kiryx*, to be written, and party leaders to be consulted and advised. And amid it all he found occasion for early morning fishing excursions, after-luncheon rubbers of bridge, *tête-à-têtes* in agreeable society and political discussions with me and others. I envied the mental force of this man, who, at such a time

of conflict, could throw away care for a short hour, and, ignoring alike the daily warnings of intrigue against his life and the presence of the four Cretan "bravoes" and eleven gendarmes who mounted guard over him, sit on the gunwale of a fishing-boat and charm an intimate society of holiday makers.

M. Venizelos is a widower with two sons. He is a man of ascetic tastes. He favours the simple life, eats frugally and neither drinks nor smokes. His sole recreation is an occasional game of bridge, for no higher stakes than are necessary to make it interesting. He rises early and retires late. Society sees him but rarely. He lives in his work, and his one ambition is to strive for the glory of Greece, even if it should entail his personal effacement. Though he has necessarily been confronted with many tempting opportunities to amass wealth, he has preferred to remain poor.

From the very beginning of the war he expressed unbounded confidence in the ultimate triumph of the Allies. He pierced the hollowness of German "Kultur" long before that vicious virtue had disclosed its Balkan ambitions by alliance with Turkey and Bulgaria, and he never doubted that the friendship of Britain and France was the manna upon which Greece would grow and wax strong. He is no fair-weather friend of the Entente. Long before the Allied soldiers were marching to the victory which now

awaits but its liquidation, long before new armies could serve only to quicker triumph, and in the days when much was mere hazard, he willed to see his country battling in the cause of freedom and righteousness.

He is Eleutherios—"Liberty."

CHAPTER II

CONSTANTINE AND HIS ENTOURAGE

It is to be feared that the course of Greek politics has prevented the British public from gaining a true appreciation of the character and accomplishments of King Constantine XII. He has been one of the principals in a duel in which his opponent happened to be our friend, and publicity has accordingly been given to his vices rather than to his virtues. When one is almost daily confronted with such headlines as "Tino in a temper," and "Tino, a human cocktail," and is informed on apparently unimpeachable but generally unquoted authority that he is a mere puppet in the hands of his German Queen, drinks to excess, swears like a cattleman, and has smoked his nerves to distraction, the temptation is to sympathise with the Greeks, and attribute most of the ills that have befallen Hellas to the idiosyncrasies of her ruler.

But there is little truth in all this. Certainly King Constantine has a temper, and an uncommonly well-developed one at that, and he has a deep understanding of the English as well as the Greek language. I

remember being received in audience after the French occupation of Corfu, when His Majesty favoured me with his opinions concerning that interference with his sovereign rights. He had "got over it" then, he told me, for the Russian Minister had visited him earlier and had received the full benefit of his —not unnatural—indignation; and, though his prevailing cheerfulness had in part returned, I could not help feeling rather sorry for Prince Demidoff.

To say that King Constantine is over-addicted to liquor is an accusation none the less slanderous because it is made in ignorance. Never once on all the occasions upon which I have met him after dinner have I observed the slightest indication of a lapse from the pathway of strict moderation, and it may be added that the Greeks as a race are temperate in the extreme, drunkenness being practically unknown in the land. While he shares the national fondness for the cigarette, I confess that on more than one occasion during a long interview, it has been mine to beg His Majesty to smoke in order that I might be privileged to do likewise.

Psychologically speaking, I suppose we are all human cocktails—mixtures of varied characteristics with a strain of naughtiness lying at the bottom like a preserved cherry or a green olive. King Constantine is no exception to the rule. There is an essential manliness about him, with his big, robust appearance and his blunt, soldierly way of dealing with

men and things. No living monarch cuts a more imposing figure on State occasions or is more perfectly charming in the intimacy of the Court circle. Prolonged illness has now lined his handsome face; but, though the open wound in his side occasionally stirs him uneasily in his chair, there is little other sign of months of suffering. He has a happy knack of throwing aside Court ceremony and putting the visitor entirely at his ease, and while as a rule he talks much and has a fondness for a good listener, he permits one to converse with him as man to man, rather than as commoner to king. In fact, his sympathetic personality and the absence of formality make it difficult for the stranger to realise that deep down within him there lies an autocratic instinct, which he has inherited from a Russian mother, or imbibed from German associations.

The King of the Hellenes has a liking for uniform. In "business hours" he favours the undress apparel of a Greek general; but I am not sure that mufti does not become him better. In those days when Greece was a happy land there were few more delightful sights than that of King Constantine, garbed in lounge suit and bowler hat, taking an afternoon stroll under the pepper trees with some members of his charming family—generally the little Prince Paul and Princess Helene, to whom he is devoted. Physically, Greece possesses one of the soundest dynasties in Europe; and, if things had been otherwise,

the relationship between the thrones of Britain and Hellas might with advantage have been tightened, for rumour credited Princess Helene with ambition, and it cannot be denied that she possesses somewhat unusual qualifications.

Despite suggestions to the contrary, I insist also that King Constantine is a most capable soldier. I spent much of the second Balkan war at his side, and it is the fact that he took a leading part in the deliberations of his General Staff. He is a strong disciplinarian and a good strategist, an excellent tactician and a born leader of men. The quality of leadership is, perhaps, his most noticeable talent; and, whether you see him sitting statue-like, baton in hand, taking the salute at a review, or encouraging his men in the field, you cannot but be impressed with the fact that here is no military figurehead, but a real live Royal commander-in-chief whose presence adds whole divisions to the value of his army.

And yet, with all these recommendations, King Constantine has failed. His vices have robbed his virtues of their potentiality for the glorification of Hellas. With his policy we shall deal later, but it may be said at once that, holding a grossly exaggerated opinion of the might of the Prussian military machine, he usurped a position (as director of Greek diplomacy) for which nature had not fitted him, and crowned his failure by giving unbridled licence to his inborn obstinacy. King George I was a most successful constitutional

monarch; he steered Greece through many a time of crisis with wonderful tact and ability, and it is possible that had he been able to foresee the events of 1914–1916 he would have chosen for his successor some other school than the militarist and despotic Berlin Academy. It was there that Constantine learned his soldiering; there also that he must have absorbed those Prussian ideas of autocratic rule and Divine Right which, although they lay latent during the first part of his reign, were dragged to the surface by the Royalist clique, or broke out automatically when Germany let loose the dogs of war. It was an unfortunate development, for Greece is a "Republican monarchy," the people are essentially democratic in character, and in their normal life there is no room for the application of absolutist principles which are doomed even in Prussia.

Obstinacy is King Constantine's besetting sin. Tricoupis is said to have noted it in the boy; King George warned him against it in middle age; most of those who know him have remarked it in the monarch. He decided upon a definite policy, and refused to amend it according to circumstances. He treated politicians like soldiers, and stormed diplomatic problems as he would have assaulted enemy strongholds. "What I have said I have said," was his motto, and, unlike the originator of that classic phrase, he could never be brought to alter his opinion under the pressure of private or public opinion.

From a purely Greek point of view his neutrality could be justified up to a point, and had he possessed a more pliable *esprit* he might have emerged from the ordeal in triumph, for a secret change of policy in January 1916 would have saved Greece from the unfortunate predicament in which she finds herself to-day. Unfortunately, however, he was unable to subordinate his anger at Entente diplomacy and his hatred of Venizelos to the general welfare of his country, and the result has been internal chaos, humiliation and territorial loss. He kept Greece standing at the cross-roads, the while heavy traffic, hurtling by in all directions, smashed her wings, battered her body, and damaged her engines.

Queen Sophie

Queen Sophie has played an important *rôle* in Greece since the war began; but, in attributing all her husband's unfriendly acts to her influence, some writers give her too much praise. It was a clever scheme of Kaiser Wilhelm's to marry off his sister to the future King of Greece, yet the union was not popular in the kingdom. The German character was never admired in Hellas, and the Princess Sophie proved to be no exception to the rule. Even her voluntary conversion to the Orthodox faith missed fire, and when, prior to the advent of Venizelos, she, in common with the other princes and princesses, was

practically exiled from Greece, her Hohenzollern pride received a blow from which it never really recovered. The union of dynasty and nation which accompanied the successes of the first Balkan war restored Queen Sophie to her rightful position in Greece, and old animosities were buried with mutual consent.

Her Majesty was in Berlin when Armageddon disturbed the peace of Europe, and the Kaiser was bent on securing the armed co-operation of Greece. Possibly for this reason William II condescended to take breakfast with his sister on the day of her departure for Athens, upon which occasion he reminded her of her family obligations, and insisted that she must persuade her husband to join forces with Germany.

The while Queen Sophie was *en route* for Greece, William badgered his brother-in-law first to fight on his side, and then to remain neutral if Bulgaria attacked Serbia. To King Constantine's credit, be it said, the War Lord received something very near to a snub for his pains.

The Greek Court awaited the arrival of its mistress with considerable misgiving. As one exalted personage put it to me: "I expected nothing less than a divorce." Whether because the Queen was a cleverer diplomat than her brother, or whether at that time she was really desirous of placing Hellenic before Prussian interests, her homecoming was marked by extreme amiability and subservience to the King's will. Far from claiming the Greek forces for Germany, she fell in whole-heartedly

with Constantine's determination to keep Greece out of the ring.

Queen Sophie is a clever woman, and she understood her man. She knew that if she openly attempted to push her husband into the arms of the War Lord, he would probably break away in the other direction. She was diplomatic in a *milieu* in which diplomacy has been rather distinguished by its absence. She set about the creation of a pro-German atmosphere, in which the King lived and had his being.

She is an excellent mother: German-like, she is supreme in her home; Kaiser-like, she rules the Court. Aided by the King's grave illness, she placed the marital ties on a firmer basis than they had ever been before. She made herself the true helpmate, and, wielding her influence in its normal sphere, rendered intolerable in the household the position of any one who owned to pro-Entente sympathies. Ardent Ententophiles like George Melas, the King's secretary, were driven out, and the others knew that their jobs depended upon their acceptance of the political views of their Royal mistress. Society ladies and Court hangers-on also discovered that Royal favour was doled out in proportion to the strength of their pro-Germanism, with the result that the King soon moved in a vicious Ententophobe environment.

For the German diplomats she naturally provided an Open Sesame, the while the Entente representatives saw the King but

rarely, and then generally contrived to quarrel with him. This woman, with her rigid notions of morality, took under her motherly wing the famous Baron von Schenk zu Schweinsburg, whose morals would shock a Hottentot, and made him *persona grata* at the Court of her husband. Theotokis, a brother of Greece's notorious Germanophile Minister at Berlin, is her Chamberlain; she was in constant telegraphic communication with the Kaiser until the Allies seized the wires, and acted as the guide, philosopher and friend of the six-foot diplomatic mediocrity who carried Bethmann-Hollweg's notes and notions up to the Greek Foreign Office and dined in solitude at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, dressed in a soft shirt, a cummerbund and a pair of flannel trousers.

Queen Sophie has done well by her brother.

The Inner Cabal

When King Constantine deposed M. Venizelos from power and entered upon his short-lived journey into the realms of autocracy, he cast around him in search of material for the formation of a personal cabinet, and succeeded in collecting a bevy of kindred spirits, to some of whom the occasion offered a pleasing prospect of personal power, and in all of whom the desire to exploit the Royal personality in order to encompass the ruin of the great Cretan leader was, perhaps, the outstanding feature of their political vista.

They all belonged to the party best known as Anti-Venizelist. Now the Anti-Venizelist is a curious combination. Despite many evidences to the contrary, he is presumably a patriot at heart; but his political judgment has been fantastically warped, and he seems to set off from the starting-point that anything which Venizelos thinks, says, proposes or does is wrong, *ipso facto.* I remember recently discussing a question of Balkan politics with him (in the shape of the editor of a leading Athenian newspaper), when he swept aside the whole of my theory in a single sentence: "Your arguments are the arguments of Venizelos." That, to him, was the last word—my premises were unsound, and if not unsound, then inadmissible—because Eleutherios Venizelos held similar views! I verily believe that he would have followed the advice of Satan himself rather than that of his hated political opponent.

In this psychological fact you have the source of much that has happened in Greece. Many have become pro-German for no other reason than that they were anti-Venizelist.

The inner cabal which assisted the King to direct the ship of state was composed of three men—Dr. Georges Streit, General Dousmanis and Colonel Metaxas. It must be said in the monarch's excuse that, once he had decided to dismiss M. Venizelos, the creation of a private cabinet was rendered necessary by the absence of any material for an alternative Government, in the real sense of the

word. He was compelled to pit his own popularity against that of the Cretan, and to inaugurate a distinctly personal policy. Also he looked to the army for support, if necessary, against the people. Hence he called in as his advisers a former diplomatist and professor of international law, and the two strongest men on the General Staff. With the assistance of this triumvirate, King Constantine "ran the show." It may be added incidentally that, under these circumstances, Entente diplomacy should either have restored real constitutional government at once or exerted itself in an endeavour—however forlorn—to bring the King over to its side. Unfortunately, it did neither until June 21st last, when the Rupel incident precipitated an action which should have been taken in October 1915. The policy of pin-pricks and personal abuse merely led to an *impasse* which seriously hampered the movements of the Salonika expedition, and allowed the Hellenes no chance to strike for their own salvation.

The *rôle* of Dr. Georges Streit was that of His Majesty's adviser on foreign affairs. A perfect gentleman and a charming companion, he remained a popular and respected private citizen until M. Venizelos dug him out from his professorship at the university of Athens and sent him as ambassador to the Court of Francis Joseph. His success in the congenial atmosphere of Vienna was such that after the second Balkan war (1913) M. Venizelos

appointed him Foreign Minister in his Cabinet. He remained in this capacity until August 1914, when a disagreement with the Cretan Premier on the subject of the unconditional participation of Greece in the European conflict led to his resignation. From that date he has been the King's guide and philosopher, and has had much to do with the general direction of Greek foreign policy.

Dr. Streit has, as his name implies, German blood in his veins. His grandfather, a Bavarian, accompanied King Otto to Greece, and his father ended an honourable career as governor of the National Bank. His mother was a Greek. Though he undoubtedly tries to discuss international politics from a Hellenic standpoint, he has never succeeded in ridding himself of a certain leaning towards Teutonism. I first marked this as early as in June 1914, when he assured me that the Serbian fears of Austrian aggression were unfounded! Subsequent war-time discussions left no doubt in my mind, for I found that in every matter of opinion, such as the responsibility for Armageddon, or the fate of Verdun, or the economic situation in Kaiserland, he resolved the doubt in favour of Germany. Here is an extract from my diary:

"There is always a tendency with him to seize on possible difficulties for the Entente—lack of unity, possible disputes, stalemate in France, doubt as to Russia, etc., coupled with the idea that we talk too much and

do too little. Sometimes it seems as though he would welcome a German success. How far this is due to a love for German institutions as against the democracy of the Venizelist *régime*, and how far it is the result of Entente diplomacy, it is not easy to say."

I think the Doctor wished Greece to intervene when we had established a definite military superiority in Europe and knocked the edge off Bulgarian resistance in the Balkans. In the meantime, he believed in an indecisive peace, and cherished all manner of illusions as to our inability to triumph over the Prussian machine. This theory blinded him to the actualities of the situation to such an extent that, when I recently begged him to safeguard the interests of Hellas by coming to an arrangement for intervention under certain defined conditions, he turned on me with the observation: "I know what you want. You want a declaration from us that we will come in, so that you can go and show it to Roumania." The suggestion was, of course, absurd, for I was discussing the position of Greece, not that of the Entente; but it clearly indicates the lengths to which the anti-Venizelists had to go to justify their policy of abstention.

There is no *prima facie* reason why General Dousmanis should be a pro-German. True, his relations with the French military mission, whose efforts had much to do with the success of the Greek army in the Balkan wars, were

the reverse of pleasant, and created an anti-French bias within him; but I rather think that devotion to the Throne and hatred of Venizelos were the principal factors in his attitude. He once lost his position as Chief of the General Staff after some unseemly references to M. Venizelos (then in office), and was only reinstated by the same hand in the spring of 1915, as the result of a subterfuge which did him little credit.

Hence there is an old-standing quarrel between the two men, which has without doubt considerably influenced the soldier's attitude in the national squabble, for he was perfectly well aware that the return of Venizelos would bring his own control of the military organisation to an abrupt termination.

General Dousmanis is a man of strong character, a strict disciplinarian, liked by few and feared by all. He looks out upon life through "khaki" spectacles. Militarism is his gospel, and shortly after the outbreak of the world war he declared that an absolutist *régime* was the most suitable form of government for the army and the nation. He despises politicians, and poured ridicule upon M. Venizelos's ventures into the domain of strategy. "Diplomacy is a failure," he told me on one occasion. "The only people who count to-day are the soldiers." And so he elaborated his scheme to set up the General Staff in supreme control of the diplomatic and civil administration of the State. It

would have been better for him had he realised that the soldier who seeks to be a politician is no less liable to failure than the politician who tries to be a soldier.

By no means a genius, Dousmanis owed his position to the fact that he was (and probably still is) the Sovereign's most loyal and very obedient servant. King Constantine trusted him implicitly to obey all orders, and to do nothing without the Royal approval. With Dousmanis controlling the Staff and the Staff controlling the Government, the absolutist *régime* was virtually a *fait accompli*, and the suppression of civil liberty followed as a matter of course. The plague of secret police, the royalist propaganda in the army, the anti-Venizelist Reservist Leagues, the temporary triumph of personal over popular government—all these nefarious plots against democracy were hatched in the General Staff headquarters in Academy Street.

In his attitude to the war, General Dousmanis reflected the Palace confidence in German military prowess. He alleged that the conflict was too big, too overwhelming for Greece, and he held a curious view that Serbia made a grievous mistake in "allowing herself" to be drawn into it. In my conversations with him he made much of the "Slav" menace, and professed a belief that within five or six years Britain, France and Germany would find it necessary to combine against Russia and her vassal states. Greece, according to this pseudo-statesman, was des-

tined to be the bulwark against Slavism in the Orient.

Colonel Metaxas has shared with Dr. Streit the honour (or dishonour, if it so pleases you) of moulding King Constantine's foreign policy. While I have reasons for crediting him with staunch patriotism, there is no doubt that he has been carried off his feet by an overwhelming admiration for the German army, and a total inability to conceive even the possibility of its defeat. Of his strategical ability there can be no question. Educated at the Berlin Military Academy, he so outdistanced his German fellow-students that he was nicknamed "the little Moltke." Returning to Greece, he worked (and quarrelled) with the French mission, after which he earned great and well-merited distinction during the two Balkan wars. Incidentally, it may be admitted that if his own plan for the conquest of the Dardanelles (completed in July 1914) had been adopted by the Allies, Constantinople would probably have been in our hands by the summer of 1915.

As one of the most successful products of the Prussian military school, Metaxas not only nursed a touching belief in the invincibility of his old masters, but accepted all they told him with childlike confidence. This led him, as it led Dr. Streit, to resolve matters of doubt in favour of Germany. Thus, as late as May 16th of this year, he went to elaborate lengths to prove to me that Russia was incapable of taking the offensive, that

the Serbian army was beyond repair, that Verdun would fall and rob the Entente of any hope of victory, and that, though Britain had managed to obtain the men, she could not possibly train the officers. He discounted Italian aid, declared that Bulgaria would fight to the bitter end, and was persuaded that Roumania would not intervene. A more complete catalogue of false prophecy it would be difficult to imagine. Yet this is the sort of twaddle that was almost daily hashed up to King Constantine by the man whom he regarded as the most brilliant of his Staff officers!

And when it came to the Balkans, Metaxas had facts and figures to show that we had insufficient forces for an advance from Salonika, and a further stock-in-trade of arguments to demonstrate that if we concentrated the necessary reinforcements, the communications were inadequate for the purposes of supply. While interested in the destruction of the Bulgarian army, he dismissed appeals based on Greek *irredenta* on the ground that he was a soldier and not a politician, and demanded that the chances should be 80 per cent. in favour of complete success before Greece quitted her neutrality.

I esteem Colonel Metaxas as the cleverest of the triumvirate. He could be relied upon to provide an elaborate display of mental gymnastics, and he succeeded in exercising a noticeable influence over certain members of the Cabinet and the two leading anti-

Venizelist newspapers. Yet his arguments against intervention were not substantial. At best they were mere excuses for the perpetration of a policy which was obviously calculated to conduct Greece to the brink of national disaster. As one of the Hellenic ministers abroad warned his Government: "The point of view adopted by the General Staff shows them to be ignorant of English history. They cannot work out the result of this war by a process of military mathematics."

Such, then, were the men around King Constantine. They were aided and abetted by a gang of court flunkeys and flatterers, who sought little save to fawn in the grace of their Royal master and mistress; but to Streit, Dousmanis and Metaxas must be attributed the chief responsibility. I have struggled and argued with them for hours consecutively (this, indeed, was the only hope until the Entente Powers tardily attempted to restore popular government), and the conclusion I reached was not that they *could* not, but that they *would* not understand. If a funeral pall has been thrown over the future of Hellas—as may prove to be the case—they must share the ignominy with the King, for without their support his position would speedily have become untenable.

CHAPTER III

BARON VON SCHENK ZU SCHWEINSBURG

WHEN the story of Greece's part in the Great War comes to be written, a special chapter will need to be devoted to the doings of Baron von Schenk, the presiding genius of the German propagandist movement in King Constantine's capital. Confronted with a Government and a people overwhelmingly Ententist in sympathy, he popularised his own theme, and exploited the mistakes of Entente diplomacy and the weaknesses of the internal situation to such tune that he succeeded in preparing a terrain upon which the policy of neutrality has thriven and flourished, where it would otherwise have shrivelled up into insignificant littleness.

Baron von Schenk zu Schweinsburg (whose name, being freely translated, might read: Baron Pothouse of the Pigcastle) arrived in Athens in the summer of 1914, ostensibly charged with the task of selling Krupp guns to an army already equipped with Creusot artillery. On the outbreak of war he had to seek other employment, and, curiously enough,

he blossomed forth as the correspondent of the Wolff Telegraphic Agency. He was admittedly the most affluent journalist in Athens, and again, by a happy coincidence, he found a most capable assistant in a certain Dr. Karow, an individual who ceaselessly devoted himself to the direction of the German Archæological School until events called him to discharge his debt to the Fatherland.

The Schenk-Karow outfit had to face a problem of no mean difficulty. Of the fourteen Athenian newspapers then in existence, twelve were Venizelist and Ententist and the other two merely anti-Venizelist. Pro-Germanism went around with its tail between its legs, and, to continue the simile, Schenk had not a dog's chance of success. But, undismayed by the difficulties of the task, the Teuton set to work with characteristic thoroughness. The papers declined to print his *communiqués*, so he put it to them that this was not neutrality, and offered his wares as interesting copy which possessed the additional advantage of being paid for at advertising rates on publication. And the *communiqués*, being long, were profitable. Little by little he worked his way in, and then developed plan number two. Articles extolling the achievements of the German army, written by a so-called military expert, were sent around with a note attached: "Please insert this article and send the account for same. The amount will not be questioned." Plan number three consisted in the seeking out of journalists (of whatever political

colour) who frequented resorts of doubtful reputation, and the persistent foisting upon them of "presents" with which to drink the health of German arms. Not bribes, you will understand; simply love-tokens of German gold wherewith to amuse themselves with wine and women already in league with the Baron, who held himself deeply affronted if his liberality was declined.

Schenk was clever enough to walk warily and to smile over rebuff and discouragement, of which, in the early days, there was a good and sufficient supply. His intermittent bombardment, however, disclosed the weaknesses in the enemy lines, and one day he attacked in mass formation and secured the first of the hostile positions in the shape of one of the smaller fry of Athenian news-sheets which had ever led a precarious existence. Thus encouraged, he gobbled up the lesser lights one by one, until there remained but the great beacons of public opinion. A less capable general would have tried to drive home the advantage at once. Schenk waited until we provided the weapons; and then, profiting by our disregard of his activities, our ill-conceived Dardanelles expedition, our offer of Greek territory to Bulgaria, the dispute between the Crown and Venizelos, and the existing, if still limited, antipathy to the Cretan statesman, he rushed in with his money-bags and completed the conquest. Of the fourteen journals, ten ultimately advocated the policy of the great German propagandist. One newspaper,

indeed, erected a new five-story edifice which is facetiously referred to as "La maison de Schenk (cinq) étages."

Athens was, of course, merely a sector of a comprehensive German scheme having for its object the corruption of public opinion in neutral countries. The headquarters of the organisation would seem to have been located in Switzerland, with an active branch in Roumania, and from Berne, Geneva, and Bucharest there flowed a constant stream of manufactured falsehoods which were prominently featured in the columns of the subsidised Press.

Schenk's activities were not confined to the newspapers. He ran an efficient spy system in which women of ill-repute figured prominently, cultivated everything and everybody of even problematical value to his cause, financially assisted theatrical revues replete with offensive references to the Entente, and paid a *claque* to applaud the gibes. He it was who organised the pro-German demonstration on King Constantine's "name day," when the ovation accorded to the Staff of the German Legation was second only to that enjoyed by the monarch himself. In short, he made his cause profitable, if not popular.

Now, though Germany owes the benefits which the neutrality of Greece has bestowed upon her largely to the ability—I will even say the genius—of this one man, it must be remembered that our sins of commission and omission played into his hands to a remarkable degree.

Our mistakes of commission are now generally admitted. In fact, when he was ultimately forced to leave Athens by the Allies after his two years of successful labour for the Fatherland, he himself paid a warm tribute to the assistance he had received. "When I came here," he said, "opinion in Greece was, if not hostile, certainly unsympathetic towards Germany. The British and French could do what they liked. I had to begin with nothing. . . . The Allies have been my best asset up to now. It depends entirely upon them whether they will continue my work or not."

The extent to which we neglected to counteract his propaganda is not so universally appreciated. The attention of the Entente Powers was early drawn to the importance of keeping the Press on our side; but, whether owing to the absence of precedent or because we were too cocksure of our position, Schenk was allowed to pursue his conspiracy unopposed. If we had troubled ourselves to maintain the journalistic *status quo* as it existed in August or even in December 1914, it is improbable that Venizelos would ever have been driven from office.

Those who doubt the value of propaganda need only study what the Germans have accomplished in Greece by that agency. A positive "funk" of Teuton prowess, a dread of war, a blind confidence in the monarchy, a hatred of Venizelos, a revolt against the Entente Powers, a desire to live and suffer and be left alone—all these were dinned into Hellenic ears day

after day by 75 per cent. of the Press, until there was wrought a gigantic transformation of public opinion. The results were self-evident. During the summer of 1915 the Central Theatre produced an Entente-Venizelist revue; a year later it staged the same framework filled in with Germanophile tableaux and patter. Eighteen months ago the Bulgarian occupation of Rupel would have set the Greek nation aflame; six months ago it was received with nothing more than a dull exhibition of painful discontent. At the commencement of the war no newspaper dared to write a line in favour of Germany. By June 1916 even the journals which remained loyal to Venizelos were accused of being in the pay of the Entente!

What we needed in Athens was a Baron von Schenk—a cleaner Schenk, if you like, but nevertheless one capable of pitting his tact, initiative, and organising ability against this clever by-product of Prussian militarism.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS

THE outbreak of the European War found the Near East still troubled by the aftermath of the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913. The defeat of Bulgaria had been definite, but not final, and King Ferdinand's Government, still coveting Central Macedonia and Kavalla (in which respect they were openly encouraged by influential circles in England, France and Russia), had not yet submitted the Treaty of Bucharest for ratification by the Sobranje. Between Turkey and Greece the status of some of the Ægean Islands was still in dispute, and in this connection M. Venizelos was *en route* for Brussels to negotiate a settlement with the Porte when Austria delivered her epoch-making ultimatum to Serbia.

There was, therefore, every possibility that the area of hostilities would ultimately extend to the Balkan Peninsula, and that Greece would be called upon to play a part in the great drama. The Greek Premier was quick to realise this. Even thus early, his outlook upon the new situation was governed by three fundamental considerations. His great po-

litical ambition had always been to realise the union of the Greeks still under alien rule with the motherland, and he held it the duty of the kingdom to regard with particular interest the status of the millions of Hellenes of Asia Minor. He deemed it essential that the Balkan *status quo*, as established by the Treaty of Bucharest, should be maintained; and he regarded the Greco-Serbian Alliance as a binding and vital engagement. Thus we find that when, being then at Munich, he received on July 25th, 1914, a telegram from M. Pashitch, the Serbian Premier, asking for an indication of the attitude of Greece in view of the fact that diplomatic relations between Austria and Serbia had been severed, he took deliberate action in three directions:

1. He replied to M. Pashitch to the effect that, though being absent from Athens he was unable to make any definite statement, he would advise his Government that, in his opinion, Greece should hold her forces ready to oppose Bulgaria if she eventually attacked Serbia—this with the double object of preserving Serbia from a stab in the back, and of assuring respect for the Treaty of Bucharest.[1]

[1] After Austria's formal declaration of war upon Serbia, M. Pashitch again demanded information as to the attitude that Greece had decided to assume. M. Venizelos had then returned to Athens, and, following a Cabinet Council held at the Palace, under the presidency of King Constantine, on August 2nd, 1914, he replied to the Serbian Government as follows:

"The point of view that the independence and integrity of Serbia constitute a principal factor in the matter of the

2. He advised the German Government of the Greek point of view, in order that Berlin, thus acquainted with the real intentions of Greece, would be in a position to counsel moderation at Sofia, and check any attempt on the part of Austria to induce Bulgaria to intervene against Serbia.

3. He telegraphed the following instructions to the Greek ministers abroad:

"It is indispensable that there shall be no doubt in the mind of anybody that the decision of Greece is not to remain with folded arms in face of any eventual Bulgarian attack on Serbia. It will be impossible for Greece to tolerate such an aggression, which might lead to the aggrandisement of Bulgaria and threaten the very spirit of the Treaty of equilibrium established by the Treaty of Bucharest (to the maintenance of which Greece is firmly and resolutely attached) is in itself sufficient to dictate to the Government the measures which it must take to aid its friend and ally. The Government considers that it will fulfil its obligations as friend and ally by a decision, on the one hand to maintain an attitude of benevolent neutrality *vis-à-vis* Serbia, and on the other hand to hold itself ready to ward off any danger coming from Bulgaria. The participation of Greece in the present war, so far from being useful to Serbia, would really be prejudicial to that State. Supposing that Greece intervened in the conflict, she would only be able to send very feeble forces to the aid of Serbia (in comparison to the strength of the adversary by whom she is opposed), and such action would render inevitable an attack on Salonika, which is the only port by which Serbia can be provisioned. The active participation of Greece would necessarily reduce her military power, and it is in the common interest that she should preserve this intact in readiness to meet the danger which, coming from Bulgaria, might menace both States."

Bucharest. This attitude is imposed upon Greece, not merely by reason of her obligation towards her ally, Serbia, but also in virtue of the necessity of self-preservation."

Simultaneously with this, M. Venizelos got into touch with the Cabinet of Bucharest, and proceeded with them to a joint friendly *démarche* to Bulgaria, in which it was made clear that the Governments of Greece and Roumania would insist upon the maintenance of the Treaty of Bucharest, as, indeed, they had undertaken to do in a secret annexe to that document. Although Bulgaria insisted upon her determination to remain neutral, her intrigues in the European capitals and the obvious existence of a Turco-Bulgarian pact, as indicated by a pre-war scheme of joint action by comitadji bands in Macedonia, evidently aroused M. Venizelos's suspicions, for he maintained a well-equipped Greek army of 120,000 men under the colours, in order to deal with any possible hostile move.

While still in Europe, M. Venizelos seems to have been convinced that Turkey had no intention of proceeding to an amicable settlement of the Ægean Islands question, and to have foreseen the two-faced German diplomacy which later on, while promising Greece a full recognition of her claims to complete sovereignty, actually encouraged the Porte to embark upon a war of reconquest. Returning to Athens in the early days of August 1914, he followed up an unofficial suggestion by the

Russian Minister that the time had now come for Greece to make common cause with the Entente, by placing the Hellenic forces at the disposal of the Grand Alliance. There is reason to believe that King Constantine was not in entire sympathy with this unconditional demonstration of solidarity with the Grand Alliance, but he accepted the *fait accompli* and congratulatory telegrams were exchanged between His Hellenic Majesty and King George. The Allies declined this proffered assistance on the ground that they did not wish to provoke Turkey; but the Cretan statesman had, nevertheless, thus early taken a definite stand on their side. In fact, at the first Crown Council held at Athens immediately after the outbreak of the European War, M. Venizelos addressed the King in the following terms:

"If, as a result of this war, other Balkan States are to increase their territory, we must not ourselves let slip the opportunity of territorial extension. Neither to nations nor to individuals does opportunity come often. Both must seek to profit by the first occasion which presents itself, because otherwise it will be too late."

It is important to note, in passing, that the offer then made by M. Venizelos was disapproved of by Dr. Georges Streit, then Foreign Minister. Streit resigned his portfolio and disappeared from official life to

become King Constantine's private adviser on foreign affairs. In this capacity he had much to do with the shaping of the King's unhappy diplomacy, and with the introduction of that "personal policy" which was destined to split Greece into two opposing camps.

Germany was at this time already casting around for Allies. She was reasonably sure of Turkey, and Bulgaria (according to a declaration made this summer by the President of the Bulgarian Chamber to the Hungarian newspaper, the *Pester Lloyd*) was already committed to her. Greece, however, was a stumbling-block to the speedy realisation of the Kaiser's dreams of dominion in the Near East. M. Venizelos's warning of July 25th effectually held back Bulgaria, and a suggestion of a new Balkan combination, as a result of which Turkey, Bulgaria, Roumania and Greece were to remodel the map of the Peninsula in their own favour at the expense of Serbia, which was thrown out by Talaat Bey at Bucharest, was also checkmated by the same hand.

With characteristic audacity, the Central Powers subsequently made a straight bid for Greek assistance. Through the ordinary diplomatic channels they approached the Athens Government and argued that, by her "provocative attitude" against the "internal order of a neighbouring empire," Serbia had surrendered any claim to protection. Greece was assured that, if she adhered to the German idea and broke off relations with Serbia,

"she could hope to see her frontier extended by the annexation of regions having a common ethnological character."

In reply, Germany and Austria were informed by M. Venizelos that, in view of the Greco-Serbian Treaty, his country would maintain an attitude of benevolent neutrality in respect to Serbia; but that, if Bulgaria attacked Serbia, Greece would go to the aid of her ally with her entire forces. "After the friction of the first few days," wrote M. Venizelos in the *Kiryx* of April 16th, 1916, "we obtained a declaration that the Central Powers would recommend Bulgaria not to intervene, in order not to provoke the simultaneous intervention of Greece."

Incidentally, we have here additional evidence that the Germano-Bulgarian pact was in being at the commencement of the war.

Having failed to bring the constitutionally elected government into the Germanic fold, the Kaiser sought the personal assistance of King Constantine. The monarch did not attempt to conceal his annoyance as he told me the story in his simple but perfectly appointed library in October 1914.

"Under present circumstances I am determined to remain neutral. For their part the Allies have asked us to join Serbia. I declined (for reasons which I have already explained), and now for a whole month the Kaiser has been pressing me to help him. First he wanted me to declare war on his

side, and I pointed out not only that we had had enough of war to want to keep out of it, but that the Anglo-French fleets could reduce Greece to cinders in twenty-four hours. Then he insisted that I should stand aside if Bulgaria attacked Serbia, and I informed him that I had a treaty with Serbia, which, as I had a reputation for honesty in Europe, I must stick to."

To repeat more of the conversation would be a breach of confidence; but, despite persistent effort to cajole and threaten the King into accepting his demands, the All Highest met with no greater success in the Royal Palace than had been his portion at the Foreign Office.

. . . . .

The arrival of the German battleships *Goeben* and *Breslau* at Constantinople, and their "purchase" by the Turkish Government, very seriously concerned M. Venizelos, and his anxiety was not lessened by the subsequent declaration of the Ottoman ambassadors at Paris and Petrograd that the acquisition of these two units was directed against Greece. He ordered the Hellenic navy to hold itself ready for action, prepared a decree of mobilisation, and sounded the British Government as to its attitude in the case of an eventual aggression by the Turkish fleet. To this *démarche*, Viscount (then Sir Edward) Grey replied that in such event England would

not permit the Turkish fleet to leave the Dardanelles.

So far as Turkey was concerned, this statement was reassuring; but the suspicions aroused by the ambiguous attitude of Bulgaria were not less disconcerting. In effect, the Bulgarian Government had never ceased to harp on the so-called "Bulgarian national aspirations," and they humbugged Entente diplomacy by advancing a realisation of same as the condition of their pretended readiness to quit neutrality in favour of Britain, France and Russia. The scheme was cleverly worked, and, as we know, achieved its real purpose; but, although the Bulgarian demands were accorded much sympathy in more than one of the Allied Foreign Offices, M. Venizelos met them with a direct refusal. The Hellenic districts of Kavalla and Vodena, together with a large part of Serbian Macedonia, were included in the "Bulgarian aspirations," and it was believed by Bulgarophiles in England and Russia that Greece could be induced to give up her portion in return for compensations in Northern Epirus and Central Macedonia. "The action of these Bulgarophiles was so persistent and so powerful," wrote M. Venizelos in the *Kiryx* of April 23rd, 1916, "that if it did not succeed in persuading the Entente Powers to make a *démarche* in that sense to Greece, it did lead to representations of a non-official character." The Greek Government, however, ordered its representatives abroad to refuse even the

slightest concession. The writer believes, though he has not documentary proof at hand, that when at length (October 1914) the Entente Powers came forward with a formal assurance that Greece would not be constrained to make any territorial concession to Bulgaria, M. Venizelos, far from expressing complete satisfaction, maintained his objection to any aggrandisement of Bulgaria at the expense of Serbia.

. . . . .

In October 1914, on the occasion of the second Austrian invasion of Serbia, Viscount Grey made an appeal to Greece to intervene in aid of her ally. It was, however, felt by the Cabinet that the attitude of Bulgaria constituted so great a menace that Greece would not be justified in leaving her frontiers open, and thus exposing both her own and Serbia's communications with Salonika to attack from King Ferdinand's army. For this reason M. Venizelos stipulated for the simultaneous entry of Bulgaria as a *sine qua non* to Greek intervention. But Bulgaria, far from demonstrating any disposition to assist the Entente, clearly showed that she was inclined to attack Serbia in the rear in the event of a successful issue to the Austrian offensive.

Greece, therefore, maintained her neutrality but, as the Central Empires were not desirous of adding to their enemies, she was able to induce them again to recommend Bulgaria to keep the peace.

The remarkable manner in which the Serbian army checkmated the enemy onslaught temporarily removed the danger which had threatened the Allied cause, and it was not until the month of November, when the renewed Austrian invasion of Serbia menaced King Peter's forces with annihilation, that the assistance of Greece was again sought by the Entente Powers. Viscount Grey then renewed his invitation to the Venizelist Cabinet to take up arms, and accompanied it with a promise of territorial concessions in Albania. The situation in the Peninsula was, however, even less favourable to the Allies than had been the case six weeks previously. The Serbs were weaker, the Austrians stronger. Turkey had declared herself on the side of the Central Empires, and the attitude of Bulgaria left few people who were in possession of the facts in doubt as to her intentions. The Greek Government did not hesitate to make it clear that the action proposed would amount to nothing short of national suicide, and pointed out that, while intervention would render it possible for Austria and Bulgaria to completely wipe out both Greece and Serbia, neutrality would at least again preserve Serbia from Bulgarian aggression. Nevertheless M. Venizelos indicated a willingness to march on two conditions: (1) The simultaneous intervention of Roumania. (2) In the event of Bulgaria remaining neutral, the presence in Macedonia of two Anglo-French army corps as security. The writer is under

the impression that the Entente consented to send two divisions; but, as Roumania declined to intervene, the negotiations fell through. As a matter of fact, Roumania, probably in view of the danger to which she was exposed by her common frontier with Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, soon became disinclined to share M. Venizelos's views with regard to the vital importance of the maintenance of the Treaty of Bucharest. As early as September 1914 she had declared that she no longer considered that document as a necessary base for regulating the *status quo* in the Balkans. She alleged, in effect, that if the Central Empires emerged victorious from the struggle, their triumph would result (1) in the annihilation of Serbia, (2) the probable aggrandisement of Bulgaria at the expense of Serbia. In either or both events, the Balkan equilibrium would have been completely destroyed. On the other hand, Bucharest held the opinion that an Entente victory would probably entail also a serious strengthening of Bulgaria, because the neutrality of Bulgaria, and, to a greater extent, her intervention in the war in favour of the Entente, would ensure for her important territorial expansion in Macedonia and in Thrace.

Nevertheless, M. Venizelos was able to render a further service to the Allies, for he succeeded in so directing his diplomacy that the aggressive spirit of Bulgaria was once more checked by the Central Powers. Follow-

ing which, the wonderful revival of the Serbian army, and its magnificent triumph over the Austrians on the Kolubara river, removed any imminent danger of a German junction with Bulgaria.

. . . . .

Two facts stand out clearly in the subsequent negotiations. The first is that the Entente still cherished hopes of securing the assistance of Bulgaria, and the second that, whenever Serbia was threatened with an attack from Austria, they sought salvation in the Ententophilism of M. Venizelos. In January 1915 the Serbian army was in a very unsatisfactory condition. The plague of spotted typhus had depleted mercilessly its ranks, and it lacked much essential war material. It was therefore likely to fall a ready prey to a renewed offensive, and the Entente Governments became convinced, quite erroneously, as events panned out, that a further Austrian attack was imminent.

In the face of this menace Viscount Grey turned once more to Greece, and on January 23rd, 1915, instructed Sir Francis Elliot, British Minister at Athens, to negotiate with M. Venizelos along the following lines: In view of the imminent danger of a serious Austrian attempt to crush Serbia, it was of the greatest importance that she should be assisted by all those in a position to aid her. If Greece consented to place herself by the side of Serbia, in her quality of ally, and take

part in the war, he (Grey) knew that France and Russia would both willingly consent to her receiving very important concessions in Asia Minor. If M. Venizelos desired to arrive at a definite understanding under these conditions, he should, without loss of time, make his intentions known to the Governments of Britain, France and Russia, when he (Grey) was certain that any proposition made by him would be very favourably received. The matter was pressing; for, although the defeat of Serbia would in no way modify the confidence in the ultimate defeat of Austria and Germany, it was possible that events in the Balkans would make it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain for Serbia and Greece a favourable satisfaction of their existing ambitions. On the contrary, the immediate intervention of Greece and Roumania would render certain a further defeat of Austria, and give birth to a certitude that the three States (Greece, Roumania and Serbia) would realise their aspirations and be masters of the situation in their own theatre of the war. In order that this participation should be efficacious, it was very desirable that, if the ambitions of Greece and Serbia were satisfied elsewhere, Bulgaria should be assured of the satisfaction of her aspirations in Macedonia, on the condition that she participated in the war against Turkey or, at least, conserved an attitude of malevolent neutrality if she did not decide to fight side by side with Serbia. This latter question was, of course, of par-

ticular interest to Serbia, and Viscount Grey, whilst advising Sir Francis Elliot that it was to be the subject of pourparlers at Nish, requested him to discuss the matter with M. Venizelos, with the unique object of persuading him not to oppose any concessions which Serbia might be inclined eventually to make to Bulgaria on condition that she (Serbia) realised her aspirations towards the Adriatic.

Communication of these instructions was made to M. Venizelos by Sir Francis Elliot on January 24th, 1915.

The prospect of planting the Greek flag firmly in Asia Minor appealed to the Greek Premier with irresistible force. It was a grandiose scheme, which would have realised his cherished political ambitions and made Hellas the paramount factor in the Eastern Mediterranean. King Constantine on one occasion accused M. Venizelos of being a "visionary," forgetting, apparently, that the virtue thus implied is one of the essentials of constructive statesmanship. The realisation of the Cretan's Asia Minor "vision" would have doubled the kingdom of Greece by the addition of some of the richest territory in the world, and increased King Constantine's subjects by over a million souls.

But the dangers attending intervention at this epoch were quite apparent to M. Venizelos, and he quickly decided that an effort should be made to secure the co-operation of Roumania, and, if possible, that of Bulgaria also. Faced with the possible alternative of

letting slip his opportunity or endeavouring to buy Bulgarian assistance at the cost of heavy sacrifices, he chose the latter as the lesser of two evils. The same day as he received Sir Francis Elliot's communication, he discussed almost every aspect of the situation in a masterly and now historic memorandum addressed to King Constantine, in which, it is important to note, he proposed, as a last resource, to *sell* rather than to *cede* the Drama-Kavalla districts to Bulgaria. This memorandum was subsequently published as the result of a semi-royal challenge, and its obvious importance in the sequence of events must be our excuse for rendering it in full:

"ATHENS,
"*January* 11*th*–24*th*, 1915.

"YOUR MAJESTY,

"I now have the honour to submit to your Majesty the contents of a communication which the British Minister here made to me under instructions from Sir Edward Grey.

"Greece, through his communication, is again confronted with one of the most critical periods in the history of the nation. Until to-day our policy simply consisted in the preservation of neutrality, in so far as our treaty obligation to Serbia did not oblige us to depart therefrom. But we are now called upon to participate in the war, no longer in order simply to fulfil moral obligations, but in view of compensations which, if realised, will create a great and powerful Greece, such

as not even the boldest optimist could have imagined only a few years back.

"In order to obtain these great compensations, great dangers will certainly have to be faced. But, after long and careful study of the question, I end with the opinion that we ought to face these dangers.

"We ought to face them chiefly because, even though we were to take no part in the war now. and endeavoured to preserve our neutrality until the end, we should find ourselves exposed to dangers equally serious.

"If we allow Serbia to be crushed to-day by another Austro-German invasion, we have no security whatever that the Austro-German armies will stop short in front of our Macedonian frontiers, and that they will not be tempted, as a matter of course, to come down as far as Salonika. But even if this danger is averted, and if we admit that Austria, being satisfied with a crushing military defeat of Serbia, will not wish to establish herself in Macedonia, is there any possible doubt that Bulgaria, at the invitation of Austria, will advance and occupy Serbian Macedonia? And if that were to happen, what would be our position? We should be obliged, in accordance with our treaty of alliance, to hasten to the aid of Serbia, unless we wished to incur the dishonour of disregarding our treaty obligations. Even if we were to remain indifferent to our moral debasement and impassive, we should by so doing have to submit to the disturbance of the Balkan

equilibrium in favour of Bulgaria. That Power, thus strengthened, would either now or some time hence be in a position to attack us, when we should be entirely without either a friend or an ally. If on the other hand we had, in the circumstances indicated, to go to help Serbia in order to fulfil the duty incumbent on us, we should do so in far more unfavourable circumstances than if we went to her assistance now, because Serbia would already be crushed, and in consequence our aid would be of no, or at best of very little, avail. Moreover, by rejecting now the overtures of the Powers of the Triple Entente, we should secure even in the event of victory no tangible compensation for our support in their struggle.

"Let us now examine under what circumstances we ought to take part in the contest. Above all we must seek the co-operation not only of Roumania but, if possible, of Bulgaria as well.

"If we should succeed in obtaining this co-operation through an alliance of all the Christian States of the Balkans, not only would every serious danger of local defeat be averted, but their participation would bring a most important influence to bear on the struggle of the Entente Powers. For it is no exaggeration to say that their participation would exercise an important influence in favour of the ascendency of the latter.

"In order that this may be brought about, I think we should make adequate concessions

to Bulgaria. So far we have refused even to discuss any concessions whatever by us to Bulgaria. Not only that, but we have declared that we should emphatically oppose any important concessions by Serbia which might disturb the balance of power established in the Balkans by the Treaty of Bucharest.

"So far this policy has obviously been the only one to follow. But now matters have changed. The instant that visions open out for the realisation of our national aims in Asia Minor, it becomes possible to consider some concessions in the Balkans in order to secure the success of such a far-reaching national policy. To begin with, we should withdraw our objections to concessions on the part of Serbia to Bulgaria, even if these concessions extend to the right bank of the Axios (Vardar), and if these concessions do not suffice to induce Bulgaria to co-operate with her former Allies, or at least to induce her to extend a benevolent neutrality to them, I would not hesitate, however painful the severance, to recommend the sacrifice of Kavalla, in order to save Hellenism in Turkey, and with a view to creating a real Magna Græcia which would include nearly all the provinces where Hellenism flourished through the long centuries of its history.

"This sacrifice, however, would not be merely the price of Bulgaria's neutrality, but would be in exchange for the active participation of Bulgaria in the war with the

other Allies. If this suggestion of mine were accepted, the Powers of the Triple Entente should guarantee that Bulgaria would undertake to buy the property of all those inhabitants of this ceded district who wished to emigrate within the boundaries of Greece. At the same time it would be agreed that the Greek population living within the boundaries of Bulgaria should be interchanged with the Bulgarian population living within the boundaries of Greece, each State respectively buying their properties. It would be understood that this interchange of population and the purchase of their properties would be carried out by a Commission consisting of five members, one member to be appointed severally by England, France, Russia, Greece, and Bulgaria. The actual cession of Kavalla would only take effect after the fulfilment of all these conditions. In this way a definite ethnological settlement in the Balkans would be arrived at, and the idea of a confederation could be realised, or, at any rate, an alliance with mutual guarantees between the States which would allow them to devote themselves to their economic and other developments, without being primarily absorbed almost exclusively in the task of strengthening their military organisation.

"At the same time, as a partial compensation for this concession, one would ask that, if Bulgaria extended beyond the Axios (Vardar), the Doiran Ghevghelli district should be ceded to us by Serbia, so that at least we

could acquire, as regards Bulgaria, an adequate boundary, since we should be deprived of the present excellent one to the east (of Greek Macedonia).

"Unfortunately, on account of Bulgaria's greed, it is not at all certain that, whatever concession we make, we shall be able to satisfy Bulgaria and lead her to co-operate with her former allies. If we cannot obtain Bulgaria's co-operation, then it would be important that we should at least secure Roumania's co-operation, for without this co-operation our joining in the war would be hazardous.

"My opinion that we should respond to the suggestion put before your Majesty, with a view to our participation in the war, is also actuated by other motives. In fact, if we remain impassive spectators of the present struggle, we not only run the above-mentioned dangers which the crushing of Serbia will create for us. For, even if a fresh invasion of Serbia were abandoned, and Austria and Germany should turn their efforts to coming out victorious in the two principal theatres of the war—Poland and Flanders—again the danger for us would be great: first, because if they were victorious they would be able to impose the same changes on the Balkans which I have previously indicated as possible results in the event of Serbia's defeat. Further, their victory would mean the death-blow to the free life of all small States, besides the direct damage which we should suffer through the loss of the islands (the Sporades). And

again, if the war did not end in a decisive superiority either of the one or the other, but by a return of the *status quo ante bellum*, still, after such a conclusion of the war, swift and sure would come the complete destruction of Hellenism in Turkey. Turkey coming out invulnerable from a war which she had waged against the three big Powers, and emboldened by the feeling of security which her alliance with Germany would give her—an alliance which clearly will last in the future, for such seems Germany's aim—will complete at once and systematically the work of destroying Hellenism in Turkey, driving out the population without pretext and in masses, and appropriating their possessions. In this she will not only find no opposition from Germany, but will be strengthened by her, inasmuch as Germany will be glad to get rid of a competitor for Asia Minor, which she (Germany) covets. The driving away in masses of hundreds of thousands of Greeks living in Turkey will not only destroy these, but drag down in financial ruin the whole of Greece.

"On account of all these reasons, I conclude our participation in the struggle, under the above conditions, to be absolutely imperative.

Participation is fraught, as I previously stated, with serious danger. But, unfortunately, our remaining aloof any longer also presents grave danger, as I have said above. As against the dangers to which we shall

expose ourselves by taking part in the war, the expectation soars above all—a legitimate expectation, I hope—that we may save the greater part of Hellenism in Turkey, and that we may create a great and powerful Greece. And even if we do not succeed, we shall at least have our conscience at peace, with the conviction that we have struggled to save our race from slavery, that worst of dangers, and fought for the good of humanity and for the liberty of small nations, which German and Turkish rule would endanger irretrievably. And lastly, even if we fail, we shall preserve the esteem and friendship of powerful nations—those, indeed, who created Greece and so often since have helped and supported her. Whilst our refusal to fulfil our obligations to our ally Serbia would not only destroy our moral standing as a State, and would not only expose us to the above dangers, but would leave us without friends, and destroy all trust in us for the future.

"Under these conditions our national life would be endangered.

"Your Majesty's most obedient Servant,

"EL. K. VENIZELOS."

The negotiations with Roumania for joint Greco-Roumanian action failed owing to the refusal of M. Bratiano to co-operate. In addition to this unpleasant development, the growing opposition of the Greek General Staff concentrated upon the Bulgarian bogy.

M. Venizelos was therefore reluctantly driven back to his suggested arrangement with King Ferdinand, and he set about the reconstruction of a new Balkan League by seeking his Sovereign's consent to the cession of the Drama-Kavalla provinces. In this connection, he submitted a further important memorandum[1] on January 30th, 1915, in which he balanced up the profit and loss account and made an eloquent appeal for Royal approval. This document reads as follows:

"ATHENS,
"*Jan.* 17*th*–30*th*, 1915.

"YOUR MAJESTY,

"Your Majesty has already been informed of the answer of the Roumanian Government to our proposal for joint action in aid of Serbia. This answer signifies, I think, that Roumania will refuse joint military action with us so long as Bulgaria will not share therein. Even if it were possible that Roumania would be satisfied with an official declaration of neutrality by Bulgaria towards a joint Greco-Roumanian action with the Serbians, it is altogether unlikely that such an official declaration by Bulgaria could be obtained. Moreover, the General Staff does not seem to be altogether satisfied about the safety of Greco-Roumanian-Serbian co-operation so long as Bulgaria stands apart, even after a declaration of neutrality which she could easily break directly she found an advantage in doing so.

[1] Both translations issued by the Anglo-Hellenic League.

"Matters being as they are, I think that the time has come to face with decision the necessity of making sacrifices, so that we may obtain if possible a Pan-Balkanic co-operation in the war. Such an action taken in common by the nations of the Balkans would not only secure for them in any event a local ascendency in the southern theatre of the war, but would furnish a weighty reinforcement to the Powers of the Triple Entente, sufficient probably to turn the scale definitely in their favour in the awful struggle now being carried on.

"The cession of Kavalla is assuredly a grievous sacrifice, and I feel in putting it forward a sense of very heavy and heartfelt anguish. But I do not hesitate to propose it in view of the racial compensations that can be secured to us by this sacrifice.

"I feel that the concessions in Asia Minor suggested by Sir Edward Grey can, especially if we agree to sacrifices to Bulgaria, assume such an extent that Greece, already doubled as a result of the victorious wars from which she has emerged, would have added to her yet another Greece as great and not less rich. I believe that if we were to ask for the portion of Asia Minor lying westward of the line which, beginning from Cape Phineka in the south, runs through the mountains Ak-Dagh, Kistel-Dagh, Karli-Dagh, Anamus-Dagh, to the Sultan-Dagh and thence through Kessir-Dagh, Tourman-Dagh, Gessil-Dagh, Doumanitsa-Dagh, Mysian Olympus and ends

in the Gulf of Adramyti—so long as an outlet were not permitted to us to the Propontis—it would be very probable that our request would be granted. By a rough calculation, the surface of this country exceeds 125,000 square kilometres, and therefore the extent of Hellas as doubled by the wars.

"The portion to be conceded by us (the Kazas of Sharishaban, Kavalla and Drama) has a surface of not more than 2,000 square kilometres. In extent then, it scarcely represents the sixtieth part of what we may possibly get in exchange in Asia Minor, even without taking into consideration the concession of Doiran-Ghevghelli which we should also demand. It is true that the value of the rich district under consideration is very great, and altogether out of proportion to its extent; but it is clear that it cannot be compared to the value of the portion of Asia Minor, the concession of which we propose to secure. Of even greater importance is the surrender of the Greek population in the ceded district. But if this Hellenic population can be reckoned at 30,000 souls, the Greek population of the portion of Asia Minor claimed by us amounts to more than 800,000 souls: that is to say, more than twenty-five times as many as the number given up.

"Furthermore, as I have already explained in my former memorandum, the cession of the district Drama-Kavalla would be made on the distinct condition that the Bulgarian Government would buy up the properties of

all those who wish to emigrate from the part ceded. Nor do I doubt that all our countrymen in this district would to a man sell their properties and hasten to emigrate to the new Hellas to be created in Asia Minor, increasing and strengthening the Hellenic population there.

"Under such conditions, your Majesty, it is my firm conviction that we ought to lay aside all hesitation.

"It would be difficult, and altogether unlikely, that such an opportunity for Hellenism to establish a complete national settlement as appears to-day should present itself again.

"If we do not take part in the war, whatever may be its result, in all human probability Hellenism in Asia Minor will be definitely lost to us. For if the Triple Entente should conquer, its Powers will divide, either among themselves or together with Italy, Asia Minor and the rest of Turkey; and if Germany, together with Turkey, should conquer, not only will the 200,000 Greeks already expelled from Asia Minor have no hope of returning to their homes, but the number of those expelled will be greatly increased. In any event the domination of Germanism will secure to itself the absorption of the whole of Asia Minor.

"How then is it possible, things being so, for us to allow this opportunity supplied by Divine Providence to pass—the opportunity of realising our most daring national ideals? It is an opportunity of creating a Hellas

including nearly all the lands in which Hellenism prevailed during its long life's history: a Hellas including regions of the greatest fertility, and assuring to us hegemony in the Ægean Sea.

"The members of the General Staff seem, curiously enough, not strongly attracted by these prospects. They fear, so they say, on the one side difficulty in governing so great an extent of new country, and on the other, that by our participating in the war we should be more exhausted than the Bulgarians, who might take advantage of our exhaustion after the war to attack us.

"The first difficulty no one can ignore, but I do not think that it is sufficient to warrant our refusing the realisation of the ideals of our race, in face of the unique opportunity which is presented to us to-day. Moreover, the results which, on the whole, have been obtained by Hellenic Government in Macedonia prove that, in spite of many difficulties, such a work does not exceed the powers of Hellas and Hellenism.

"The second fear is less justified. The Balkan wars have proved that we are not reduced by exertion more quickly than the Bulgarians.

"It is, however, true that for some term of years, until, that is to say, we organise the whole of our military power upon the basis of the supply of men which the conscription in greater Greece will give us, we shall in the event of war in the Balkan Penin-

sula find ourselves in need of devoting part of our forces in Asia Minor to guard against any possible local rising there. Such a rising, however, would be altogether unlikely, since, the Ottoman State being altogether out of account, our Moslem subjects would become excellent and law-abiding citizens. Moreover, any force engaged there will be supplied within a very short space of time by the Hellenic population of Asiatic Hellas itself. And then it is easy to assure ourselves against all danger from Bulgaria by arranging an oral agreement with the Powers of the Triple Alliance, upon the basis of which they should help us if during the period aforesaid we were attacked by Bulgaria.

"For my part I think that, following a successful war in which we had participated, we should have nothing to fear from Bulgaria even without such an agreement. Bulgaria would herself be busied in the organisation of the new provinces which she would gain. And if the fates should make her insane enough to wish to attack us, there is no doubt that Serbia, who has a binding obligation of alliance with us and reasons for gratitude on account of our behaviour towards her, and who will take very hardly the cession of Macedonia to Bulgaria, will co-operate with us, so that once more we would bring down Bulgaria's arrogant pride, and confine her within bounds which will make her harmless for the future.

"It is to be noted, moreover, as regards

the concession of Kavalla, that there exists no assurance that Bulgaria will agree to the abandonment of her neutrality to take common action with us and the Serbians. It is likely that she will put forward a claim, either to get these concessions simply as an exchange for her neutrality, or to get them at once, before the end of the war, and independently of results proceeding from it.

"Neither of these conditions should we be able to accept. But if our sharing in the war is nullified by the action of the Bulgarians, we would preserve the friendship and sympathy of the Powers of the Triple Alliance. And in the event of their prevailing, even if we were not able to expect such concessions as would be given us in exchange for our active participation in the war, we might, nevertheless, safely anticipate that our interests would meet with their sympathetic support, and that after the war necessary financial help would not be denied us.

"Further, I would add that the whole progress of affairs and the proposal that very wide territorial concessions to us in Asia Minor should be recognised, prove to me without the slightest doubt that the activity which has been displayed by New Hellas has gained for her the confidence of certain Powers, which consider her an important factor in the settlement of the Near East at the moment of the collapse of the Turkish State.

"The support of these Powers will supply

us with all economic and diplomatic means for facing every difficulty naturally proceeding from so sudden an increase of our territory.

"Based upon this support, Greece will be able to step forward firmly in the new and marvellous path of progress open before her.

"To your Majesty, still happily in the prime of manhood, will be given not only to create by your sword the greater Hellas, but to consolidate the military exploit by a complete political organisation of the new State. To you will be given to hand down to your successor, when the hour shall come, a finished work, superhumanly great, and such as it has been allowed few Princes to accomplish.

"Your Majesty's most obedient Servant,

"EL. K. VENIZELOS."

It is possible that the attractiveness of the proposition, combined with the moving appeal which accompanied its submission to the Sovereign, would have made it the adopted policy of King as well as Statesman. Unfortunately, however, the attitude of Bulgaria wrecked all hope of a successful issue to the negotiations. The Sofia Cabinet demonstrated its devotion to the Germanic cause by concluding a loan in Berlin on terms, be it remarked, more onerous than those offered by Paris, and M. Venizelos, rightly interpreting this action as a confirmation of the hostile trend of Bulgarian diplomacy, decided to

relinquish his attempt to reconstitute the Balkan League. The Powers of the Triple Entente, who had watched the pourparlers with more than platonic interest, then apparently proposed to replace the guarantee which would have been provided by the adhesion of Bulgaria by the despatch of two Anglo-French divisions to Macedonia; but this safeguard was considered insufficient and was reluctantly declined for the same reasons as led to the refusal of Greek co-operation in November 1914.

CHAPTER V

VENIZELOS AND THE DARDANELLES EXPEDITION

We now come to one of the most discussed episodes of the war, viz. the refusal of King Constantine to participate in the expedition against the Dardanelles, an event which culminated in the resignation of M. Venizelos, the reappearance on the scene of the old clique of discredited politicians of pre-Venizelist days, and the inauguration of a royalist, as distinct from a constitutional, policy.

If the Cretan statesman had been baulked in January, his political outlook was still governed by a desire to seize the first available opportunity for the redemption of Hellas; and a new occasion arose towards the end of February 1915, when the Allies sought anew the co-operation of Greece in their endeavour to force the Straits and open up a warm-water route to Russia. The extension of the war to Turkish territory was of vital moment to Greece. A great struggle was to be fought out on a territory largely peopled by Hellenes, and the issue had developed from a simple question of the expediency of assisting friendly

Powers into a direct challenge to Greece to enter the conflict or lose, possibly for ever, all claim to her great heritage in Asia Minor. Successful participation would have placed Greece side by side with her liberators in a war of glorious conquest, doubled Hellas, reduced Bulgaria to permanent neutrality at least (those ardent disciples of "real politik" might even have torn up their agreements with Germany), and brought in Roumania. To replace the cross on Saint Sophia was the dream of every Hellenic soul. It was a magnificent prospect.

Yet the Bulgarian danger was still existent; and, in order to overcome the objections which would doubtless be raised by the General Staff, M. Venizelos, while proposing to place the fleet at the disposal of the Allies, limited the military contingent to an army corps—a contribution which he subsequently reduced to a division of 15,000 men. On this basis he advocated participation at a Crown Council held at Athens on March 3rd, 1915, when the retired Prime Ministers were agreed in according him complete liberty of action in respect to the negotiations with the Entente Powers.

The General Staff, however, put forward numerous objections of a military nature, chief among which was the opinion of Colonel Metaxas, then acting Chief of Staff, that the capture of the Straits was impossible in view of the facilities then at the disposal of the Allies. On March 2nd, 1915, he submitted to M. Venizelos a lengthy memorandum on the subject,

in which he expressed the military point of view and argued that Greece would compromise her existence, both as a State and as a nation, if she took part in the Dardanelles enterprise.

At a second Crown Council held on March 5th, 1915, General Dousmanis, who had meantime been reinstated as Chief of the General Staff, was present and presumably intended to oppose participation; but M. Venizelos, now apparently aware of the intrigues afoot, cut the ground away from him by declaring that, as he had fixed the contribution of the land force at one division only, and as this could be replaced by calling a reserve division to the colours, the question was no longer military, but exclusively political.

King Constantine reserved his reply for the following day, and according to the anti-Venizelist *Revue Politique*, the Premier left the palace under the impression that the monarch was in accord with his policy.

Meantime, however, important interests had been at work, and such influence was brought to bear upon King Constantine by Germany and the Court camarilla that, when the Premier went for his answer the next day, he was met by a firm refusal. He immediately resigned.

. . . . .

It will be interesting now to examine precisely what were the avowed reasons which induced King Constantine to defy the elected representatives of the people, for, be

it remarked, Parliament was in almost unanimous accord with the Premier.

While M. Venizelos probably assumed that the enterprise would have a successful issue for the Allies, the General Staff was equally certain that it would end in disaster. Colonel Metaxas, whose opinion carried most weight, was very clear upon this point; and this aspect is briefly summed up in a statement made to me by a member of the Greek Royal Family and which, though I have already quoted it elsewhere, is of interest to us at this stage. This declaration (dated March 10th, 1915) ran: "The expeditionary force asked for (15,000) was considered too small to be of any practical help to the Allies, and consequently Greece would be obliged to send more reinforcements, which would necessarily weaken her military concentration on her northern (*i.e.* Bulgarian) frontier. Notwithstanding all that has been said (probably in order not to alarm the public), we know for a certainty that the Turkish army capable of being transported at any time for the defence of the Dardanelles amounts to 150,000 to 200,000 men. At the present moment the Allies have not at their disposal more than 15,000 troops for land operations, and, according to the calculations of the King and the Staff, if an army of at least 150,000 cannot be concentrated for this particular operation, the forcing of the fleet alone is considered by all military experts as an undertaking of some considerable difficulty."

The Staff also advanced an opinion that . . .

the proposed concessions in Asia Minor represented, in effect, nothing more than the coastline of a vast hinterland which was likely to remain in hostile hands. Some capital was made of possible difficulties of an administrative nature, and it was added that, even in the event of the final victory of the Entente Powers, there was no guarantee that Asia Minor would really be conquered and dismembered.

Further, as a counterblast to the desire to free the Asiatic Hellenes, it was alleged that hostilities with Turkey would probably entail their annihilation.

Vital as it appears at first sight, however, this last argument need not be taken into very serious consideration in relation to the question at issue. It was put forward with much insistence as a reason for non-participation in the attack on the Dardanelles, and it was one of the excuses advanced when the King declined to go to the aid of Serbia six months later; but the Greeks had already suffered little short of massacre, and, in the meantime, when a subservient Royalist ministry offered to join the Allies in April and in May 1915, the danger was apparently either overlooked or counted of small importance.

So much for what we may describe as internal considerations. From abroad there came two developments which affected the King's attitude. I have received very trustworthy evidence that the Kaiser warned King Constantine that if he assisted the Allies Bulgaria would fall upon his flank; and perhaps even

more weight was attached to a declaration made by M. Sazonoff, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, to M. Dragoumis, the Greek *chargé d'affaires* at Petrograd, to the effect that Russia would look upon any participation on the part of Greece in the taking of Constantinople as extremely undesirable.[1] M. Dragoumis (an anti-Venizelist) has, however, recently admitted that Britain undertook to conciliate the Russian and Greek points of view on this vexed question; and that this promise was not only made but realised is indicated in a despatch dated March 10th, 1915, addressed by the Greek Minister at Paris to his Government, in which he reported that the French Foreign Minister had informed him that "France and England had given solemn proof of their sentiment towards Greece by accepting such a reduced co-operation by her (simply the fleet and a single division of troops), and by hastening to demand the consent of Russia." M. Delcassé added, concluded the Minister, that the consent of Russia had been obtained.

We have commented sufficiently to show that the issue really centred around the military danger; and in prophesying the failure of the Allies, the opinion of King Constantine and his Staff was unfortunately justified by events. Yet this does not prove that M. Venizelos was wrong. He assumed that we would take the necessary precautions to ensure

[1] This information was eventually made public by M. Dragoumis in the *Revue Politique* of January 2–15, 1916.

success, and he cannot be held personally responsible for the want of knowledge and ability which actually marked our inception and conduct of the enterprise. Perhaps the assistance anticipated from Greece would have turned the scale in our favour. We do not know.

. . . . .

M. Venizelos now went into opposition for the first time since his entry into Greek public life in 1910. As a consequence, liberty to develop was accorded to a personal opposition to the Cretan statesman, and there entered into being not only two political parties, but two warring sets of principles, two opposing systems of government.

Perhaps it would be too much to say that the struggle between autocracy and democracy commenced immediately, but it received birth and steadily grew until it split the entire country into rival factions.

Outside of the Cretan, Greece possessed no statesman of any quality, and his resignation left the terrain free to the King and his entourage. Puppets of more or less value might be installed in the Ministries, but the real control of the State necessarily passed into Royal hands, if only from sheer absence of any alternative.

From the very commencement of the war M. Venizelos had expressed unbounded confidence in the ultimate triumph of the Allies. He wished to see his country battling by

their side in the cause of freedom and right, and he never doubted that the friendship of Britain and France was the very lifeblood of Hellas. He saw in their success also the realisation of Hellenic irredentism. For him, a German victory would have been tantamount to a Greek defeat.

On the other side, although not necessarily pro-German himself in consequence, King Constantine had studied in Germany and espoused no less a personage than a sister of the War Lord, who wielded more influence over the Court than over her husband. The General Staff, whom he set upon a higher plane than mere politicians, were largely the product of Prussian militarism, and Dr. Streit, his adviser on foreign affairs, was certainly swayed by anti-Slav and Germanophile sympathies. By a curious turn of the wheel of fate, one and all in more or less degree disliked the personality of M. Venizelos, and needed little encouragement to devote their activities to his undoing. Into the hands of this cabal fell the real control of the Greek State when M. Venizelos resigned office.

The Gounaris Cabinet, which succeeded that of M. Venizelos, was called to power at the bidding of the King. It had no support in the country. Even the frankly pro-German ancient Premier, M. Theotokis, declared at the time that he would decline an invitation to form a ministry, as he was well aware that his policy was not approved of by public opinion. And as to M. Gounaris, it is no

injustice to him to say that his main ambition was to become Prime Minister and secure his position as chief of a political opposition to the Liberal party.

King Constantine promised M. Gounaris that the work of the Venizelist Chamber should be suspended, and that at the expiration of such delay new general elections should be held. The way was therefore opened up for an unrestrained campaign against M. Venizelos, and in this enterprise the King, the General Staff, the anti-Venizelist politicians and the German propaganda joined hands.

The King took no active part, but he did not protest against his name and prestige being used as a political weapon by the Gounarists. The General Staff worked assiduously to prove by military argument that M. Venizelos's policy would have been attended with fatal results for the country. It was not long before a member of the General Staff visited the office of one of the leading Athenian newspapers, and handed in a military study of the problem of forcing the Dardanelles, which foretold the failure of the Allies and demonstrated that Greece would be ruined as a result of participation. This he asked the editor to publish " at the request of the Palace." The German propaganda is dealt with more fully in a preceding chapter (Baron von Schenk), but it seized this opportunity of coming out into the open, and exploited the King against Venizelos with telling effect.

Now whatever may have been the real inclination of the Opposition, whether they were merely anti-Venizelist and not pro-German, or whether they were much of one and little of the other, or *vice versa*, the bulk of public opinion remained steadfast in its devotion to Britain and France, and it was certain that, if perchance the Straits had been successfully forced, neither the King, nor the Staff, nor the Gounarists, nor Schenk's propaganda, nor the four agencies combined would have been able to resist the national demand for intervention which would have followed that triumph.

Possibly the new Government was favourably disposed towards the Entente; possibly it merely desired to keep up a show of friendship out of respect for the recognised strength of Venizelism in the country—we are not here discussing that aspect of the question—but it at once notified the Allies of its intention to continue the foreign policy of the late Cabinet, *i.e.* a policy of benevolent neutrality.

After the failure of our first attempt to break through to Constantinople, the Ministers of Britain, France and Russia visited M. Zographos, Foreign Minister in the Gounaris Cabinet, and made to him the following communication in a Note dated about April 12th, 1915:

"The three Allied Powers have taken note with satisfaction of the declaration by which the new Greek Government has declared its

intention to continue the external policy of the late Cabinet. The Allied Powers, for their part, are still ready, as before, to assure to Greece the territorial acquisitions already promised in the Vilayet of Aidin in return for her co-operation in the war against Turkey."

To this invitation the Gounaris Cabinet, acting, of course, upon King Constantine's instructions, put forward a proposition for intervention on April 14th, of which the following is the substance:

The Greek Government, having already declared that it was ready to co-operate with the Entente against Turkey if the peril of a hostile Bulgarian attack was removed, considered that the best solution was to obtain Bulgarian co-operation. However, in view of the equivocal attitude of Bulgaria, it had sought an alternative combination and was ready to join forces with the Entente on these conditions: During the war, and for a certain period after the war, the Entente Powers to guarantee the integrity of Greece's continental and insular territory. In exchange, the Greek Government engaged itself to co-operate with the Entente Powers immediately they undertook, in combining their own with the Hellenic forces, a war against Turkey having for its object the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. A special convention was to regulate military matters, and Greece stipulated that if Bulgaria continued to remain

neutral, the Greek army should operate only in Turkey-in-Europe. She further demanded that a definite agreement should be drawn up between the Entente and herself to fix the compensations which were to be accorded to her as well as questions of finance and the military supplies which would be necessary.

A few days later the Greek Government sent in another Note, drawn up with a view to giving greater precision to its proposition. In this it was pointed out :

1. That the desire for a guarantee of territorial integrity originated in a fear that, whereas Greece would be worn out after the campaign, Bulgaria, having preserved her forces intact, might take advantage of the opportunity to attack Kavalla and Salonika.

2. That since, in the opinion of the Greek Staff, the expedition in Gallipoli offered no chance of success, and would have to be abandoned, it would be necessary to concentrate sufficient forces on the one hand to defeat Turkey and on the other to hold the Bulgarian army in check in the case of a hostile intervention.

3. That, again in the opinion of the Greek Staff, serious operations against Turkey being now impossible on either shore of the Dardanelles on account of the numerous fortifications and important forces at the disposal of the enemy, the disembarkation of the Allied armies should be effected either to the west

of the river Evros or at a point on the Asiatic coast far removed from the Straits. It was here added that, if the General Staffs of the three Powers considered a disembarkation in Turkish Thrace as possible, the Greek army would co-operate, but on the condition that the Allies were the first to go ashore.

No official reply was made by the Entente to the Greek Government, but one of the Hellenic Ministers abroad was notified that the matter might be considered as closed. The reason for this decision was apparently fourfold. (*a*) The Greek demands were considered to be vague and extravagant. (*b*) The Allies were not, at that time, in a position to send to the Orient the number of troops considered necessary by the Greek General Staff. (*c*) The Powers were not themselves decided to proceed to the definite dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.[1] (*d*) That far from foreseeing the duplicity of Bulgaria, they were still hopeful of winning King Ferdinand over to their side.

About the end of April, 1915, Greece received a further intimation that new proposals reducing her demands to a strict mini-

[1] A telegram from the Greek Minister at Paris to his Government, dated April 17th, 1915, said: "On the subject of the definite dissolution of the Ottoman Empire the President informed me that it is impossible to know beforehand if, at the end of the war, it will be in the interest of the Powers and of Greece herself to proceed to definite dissolution or a simple and partial dismemberment of Turkey."—*Kiryx*, April 9th, 1916.

mum would possibly be accepted. The Government considered that the friendship of the Allies for Bulgaria had been the principal cause of the refusal of their first offer. They accordingly now proposed (May 14th) to join forces with the Entente by co-operating with the Hellenic navy and offering full facilities in Greek ports and on Greek territory, but reserving the army against a possible hostile move by Bulgaria until such time as that State ranged itself on their side. In exchange for this, Greece demanded a guarantee of her integrity during the war and the peace negotiations, the necessary financial assistance, and the territorial compensations in Asia Minor which had been indicated to M. Venizelos.

This second offer met with a reception similar to the first. The Entente Powers let it be known that they were not prepared to discourage Bulgaria by guaranteeing the integrity of Greece, and no further steps were taken to obtain the concourse of the Hellenic forces until October, 1915.

CHAPTER VI

SIX WEEKS IN OFFICE

FOLLOWING the resignation of M. Venizelos[1] Greece was plunged into the throes of party strife of a most virulent character. The old effete politicians who had lived in retirement since the coming of the Cretan joined forces with the new aspirants for power-at-any-price in an endeavour to create a political party capable of defeating the Liberals. They were aided, needless to say, by the German propaganda, which did not hesitate to use the plea of loyalty to the Throne in order to promulgate, at whatever cost, pro-German and anti-Venizelist theories. The people were openly asked to choose, not between Venizelos and Gounaris, but between Venizelos and the King. The Entente rendered considerable assistance. The lamentable series of set-backs in Gallipoli, the enormous casualty list and the loss of three Allied battleships, were utilised to demonstrate that the King's policy had in very truth saved the country from dire disaster. During the period of preparation for the elections, the administrative machine was used as an organ wherewith

[1] In March 1915.

to influence public opinion and, later on, to corrupt the electorate. Even the unfortunate illness of the King was turned to account, and it was alleged that, if the Monarch's life was in danger, that too, with every other misfortune which had befallen Greece in the past or might befall her in the future, must be laid at the door of Venizelos.

Thus far the chief complaint against the Allies had been that they had refused the second offer of Greek assistance because they were indisposed to guarantee the integrity of the national territory. Evidence was not lacking to show that this attitude was dictated by a willingness to dismember Greece for the benefit of Bulgaria, and resentment against this aspect of Entente diplomacy became the chief plank in the Gounarist platform.

The wordy warfare waxed fast and furious, and though the innate national devotion to Britain and France, combined with the popular faith in the Cretan statesman, triumphed over all the machinations of the Opposition at the elections of June 13th, 1915 (the Liberal Party gained 184 seats out of a possible 316), the situation was rendered more difficult by the fact that M. Gounaris had succeeded in forming a fairly strong party, which was henceforth to act as the parliamentary expression of anti-Venizelism in its various forms of Royalism, Neutralism and barefaced pro-Germanism.

The new Chamber should have assembled in July, but on the pretext of the King's illness it was adjourned until August 16th. M. Veni-

zelos protested that by this act the Gounaris Government had violated the Constitution; but he stated at the same time that his majority was ready to co-operate in order to afford in a legitimate manner the necessary time for the re-establishment of the King's health.

Thanks to this adjournment, M. Venizelos was spared the pain of being in office when the hardest blow was struck at Entento-Greek friendship.

The Allies did not share the views held, among others, by M. Venizelos and the Serbian Government with regard to Bulgaria's *liaison* with the Central Empires, and they accordingly determined to make one more bid for her assistance against Turkey. On August 3rd, 1915, they presented a Note to M. Gounaris, stating that, with a view to reconstituting the Balkan League, they had offered the Drama-Kavalla provinces of Greece to Bulgaria!

There is an impression abroad that M. Venizelos was throughout the confidant of Allied diplomacy at Athens. This is obviously incorrect, for he himself condemned this action in the *Kiryx* in the following terms:

"Independently of any notion of justice, this *démarche* of the Entente Powers, examined from a political point of view, was an essential error. Without even being assured in advance of the acceptance of their propositions by those to whom the concessions were offered, and when they themselves must have con-

sidered their acceptance as improbable in view of the conclusion of the Bulgarian loan at Berlin and Vienna in January 1915, they hastened to annoy those from whom the concessions were demanded. And the error was the greater since the Powers had every reason to know that the policy represented by the Gounaris Government did not meet with the approval of the Greek people, and that, in consequence, the return of the Liberal Party to power and the co-operation of Greece with the Entente—co-operation that they had, however, rendered problematic by their *démarche*—were probable." [1]

The effect upon the Greek people was electrical. True, the whole circumstances were not explained to them, but it was sufficient that we had offered to give away their richest lands—lands peopled by Hellenes, and which had been the prize of victory over the Bulgars in 1913—without so much as a "by your leave." On the other hand, they were not denied knowledge of the fact that Germany had promised the desired territorial integrity in return for neutrality. Prince Nicholas put it to me that Entente diplomacy had done in two weeks more than Schenk and his millions had been able to accomplish in eight months. And, as usual, M. Venizelos had to bear the brunt of this new encroachment on Hellenic rights.

As for the Germanophiles, they were jubilant.

[1] It is important to remember that M. Venizelos was Premier-elect when the offer was made.

Doors that had long been closed were opened to German propaganda, and when M. Venizelos eventually took up the reins at the end of August, his only optimism was based on a conviction that Bulgaria would refuse the Entente proposition and thus herself nullify the offer which had been made her. But the effect produced upon Greek feeling by the Note, and the fact that the military situation had changed greatly to the disadvantage of the Allies since he had left office, put the question of intervention out of court temporarily, and King and Premier worked together in comparative harmony.

Astute Bulgarian diplomacy succeeded in temporising with the Allies' proposition until the middle of September. During the first half of that month there were open rejoicings in Berlin over the alleged decision of Bulgaria to fight on Germany's side, and the *Vossische Zeitung* announced that the signature of the Turco-Bulgarian treaty meant nothing less than the final and definite determination of Bulgaria to side with Germany, Austria and Turkey.

Now whatever politicians were taken in by the idea that Bulgaria was very cleverly bluffing the Central Powers, M. Venizelos was not among them. In fact, the object of Bulgarian diplomacy was clear to every statesman and most journalists in the Balkans. There were at least half a dozen clear indications of the existence of a Germano-Bulgarian pact; and, in addition, the Greek Government doubtless learned from its Legation at Sofia that, though

Bulgaria had lost half her artillery and almost all her munitions during the second Balkan war, and though she had meantime drawn no supplies from Britain or France, she nevertheless found herself completely re-equipped for war in the autumn of 1915! This had obviously been done by the Central Empires. Further, on September 1st, M. Gryparis, the Hellenic Minister at Vienna, advised Athens that Bulgaria would declare war on Serbia on October 15th (a very close prophecy). It is true that Dr. Radoslavoff did not hesitate to presume upon the confidence of the Entente representatives until the last moment (with complete success), and that he assured the British and Russian Ministers that the mobilisation was not directed against Serbia (an official statement was issued to the effect that it constituted a preventive measure in case the Austro-Germans should advance as far as Vidin); but the Bulgarian Prime Minister could not humbug M. Venizelos. The Greek Premier had no doubt whatever that his neighbour's warlike preparations presaged an attack on Serbia, and that he was on the eve of a development which he had repeatedly warned Germany would precipitate the intervention of Greece, not only in virtue of the Greco-Serbian treaty, but also because the interests of Hellas would not allow her to tolerate a change in the Balkan *status quo* to the advantage of Bulgaria.

At this point it is perhaps necessary to remark that thus far no declaration had been

made (except to our enemies) either by the King or any of his Ministers that the Greco-Serbian treaty would not be considered valid if Bulgaria attacked Serbia. On the contrary, we have seen M. Venizelos persistently using it as an effective brake on Bulgaria. His successor, M. Gounaris, stated in March, 1915, that it remained an absolute duty for Greece to fulfil her obligations under the Greco-Serbian treaty, and a month later, when King Ferdinand's comitadjis attempted to cut the Nish-Salonika railway, he (through his Foreign Minister, M. Zographos) again called the attention of the Sofia Government to the existence of that document. The two leading anti-Venizelist journals supported this point of view, and on the occasion of the signature of the Turco-Bulgarian Convention warned those two conspirators that the first sign of aggression against Serbia would find Greece at the side of her ally.

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On September 21st, 1915, M. Venizelos, then Prime Minister, advised the Entente Ministers of his decision to mobilise the Greek army and go to the aid of Serbia if the latter were attacked by Bulgaria. The General Staff, however, now put forward the objection that the Greco-Serbian treaty was invalid, as Serbia was not in a position to furnish the 150,000 men against Bulgaria as provided for by the Military Convention attached to the treaty. M. Venizelos therefore asked whether the

Allied Governments were disposed to send to Salonika 150,000 Anglo-French troops in substitution for the Serbs, in order that Greece might succour her ally.

But events marched quickly; and on September 23rd (before the reply of the Allied Governments had been received) the news of the Bulgarian mobilisation reached Athens. The same day King Constantine accepted his Prime Minister's advice to decree the mobilisation of twenty classes of reserves "as a defensive measure." A general call to the colours followed. Much enthusiasm was manifested all over Greece, the press unanimously approved it as a necessary measure, and both M. Venizelos and the British Minister were loudly cheered by the Athenians.

But the proceeding caused "great perplexity in Bulgarian circles," and on or about September 25th Dr. Radoslavoff informed the Greek Minister at Sofia that Bulgaria had no intention of attacking either Greece or SERBIA!

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The following is Reuter's version of the important speech delivered by M. Venizelos in the Greek Chamber on September 29th, 1915:

"When the Chamber met after the outbreak of the great European War, in September last, I had the honour of informing it of the policy of the Government with regard to the situation created by this war. In the month of February of this year the Cabinet over which I then

had the honour of presiding considered that a modification of this policy was incumbent upon it. On this point the Cabinet found itself in disagreement with the Crown, and had to leave office. After the elections, once more called to office, it considered that, circumstances having altered in the interval, it should again return to the policy which it had mapped out at the beginning of the European War—the policy that I revealed to the Chamber last September.

"But the Bulgarian mobilisation could lead to no other reply than the decreeing by the Greek Cabinet also of a general mobilisation. I must, however, inform the Chamber that, after the proclamations ordering these two mobilisations, reassuring assurances were given by both parties. M. Radoslavoff informed our Minister in Sofia that the Bulgarian mobilisation had no aggressive aim either against us or against our Serbian allies. It was made necessary to Bulgaria by her proximity to the theatre of war, and its object is to make it possible henceforth for Bulgaria to maintain armed neutrality. We replied that, as long as the character of the Bulgarian mobilisation was defined in that sense, our mobilisation—the inevitable result of hers—must not be regarded as implying any aggressive object, but also as a means for the maintenance of armed neutrality.

"Nevertheless, in spite of these mutual assurances, the situation must be regarded as serious. Under the modern system of

national armies a general mobilisation, which entails a profound disturbance of the economic and social life of a country, and leads to an enormous expenditure, cannot be prolonged without grave danger to peace, and these dangers are all the greater when one of the mobilised countries does not disguise that it does not consider satisfactory the territorial *status quo* established by treaties between itself and its neighbours.

"I do not say this in order to depict the situation in colours more sombre than the reality; but, on the other hand, I have not the right to conceal the true state of affairs from the country. For, if all of us in Greece ardently wish for peace, I also know with what a spirit of incomparable self-denial the Greek people in arms is ready to defend its integrity and the vital interests of the country, and to oppose any attempt by any Balkan State to create for itself a preponderant position which would mark the end of the political and moral independence of the others. (Prolonged cheers.)

"I should, however, be glad if the reassuring explanation given on both sides by the Governments of the two mobilised States were to bring about promptly and without delay a simultaneous demobilisation, thus eliminating the dangers to peace which would naturally be engendered by an indefinite prolongation of mobilisation."

There were not lacking those who asserted

that King Constantine was not in agreement with the sentiments contained in the above speech, but criticism of this nature was silenced by the publication of an inspired paragraph in the *Hestia*, stating that M. Venizelos's manuscript had been submitted to and approved by His Majesty.

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Meantime, Britain and France had replied to the Greek Government's question asking them whether they were prepared to replace the necessary 150,000 Serbs in Macedonia by Anglo-French divisions. In principle, the reply was in the affirmative, though it was made clear that so great a force was not then ready, and that some time must elapse before the full contingent arrived in Macedonia.

M. Venizelos dealt with his much-discussed "invitation" to land at Salonika in the *Kiryx* of April 23rd, 1916:

"On the 23rd September, 1915, the day of the publication of the decree of mobilisation, M. Venizelos, having left the Palace after a collaboration with the King, asked the Ministers of France and England if the Powers were disposed to send 150,000 combatants to co-operate with the Greek army (that is to say, a number equal to that of the troops which, according to the Military Convention of the Greco-Serbian treaty, Serbia was obliged to place in line in a common war against Bulgaria).

"M. Venizelos added that these troops must be white forces and not colonials. After forty-eight hours a reply in the affirmative arrived from the Powers. M. Venizelos thanked the Ministers and hastened to communicate the information to the Sovereign. His Majesty then remarked that, according to the declarations of Dr. Radoslavoff, the Bulgarian mobilisation had not as its objective an aggression against Serbia, but simply envisaged the observation of an armed neutrality; that in consequence, the despatch of Anglo-French troops, while it was not urgent, would nevertheless constitute for Greece a violation of her neutrality at a moment when everybody in Greece was agreed not to quit neutrality, at least so long as Bulgaria refrained from attacking Serbia, and that such an aggression was merely probable and not certain. M. Venizelos communicated this statement to the Ministers of France and England, and requested them to suspend the despatch of Anglo-French reinforcements. But, following the first *démarche* of M. Venizelos, the Powers, whose eyes had at length been opened to the real intentions of Bulgaria, had decided on the despatch of reinforcements to Salonika and had given the necessary orders. They had felt the more justified in so doing, as they knew that the policy of M. Venizelos, which had been solemnly proclaimed in Parliament, included a decision to attack Bulgaria if she herself attacked Serbia. It was for this

reason that when the Ministers of France and England communicated the second *démarche* of M. Venizelos to their Governments, the Governments replied that it was then impossible for them to suspend the despatch of their troops, which had been ordered, and which had, in fact, already been commenced. When M. Venizelos remarked that the arrival of these reinforcements at Salonika prior to a Bulgarian aggression against Serbia would constitute a premature violation of Greek neutrality (which Greece had decided to maintain until the Bulgarian aggression became a *fait accompli*), and that in consequence he could not permit a disembarkation of Allied troops at Salonika without protest, the Ministers of France and England informed M. Venizelos that their Governments, being already certain of the imminence of a Bulgarian aggression against Serbia, assumed *vis-à-vis* the Greek Government the moral responsibility for the premature despatch of reinforcements, being sure, on the other hand, that immediately the Bulgarian aggression took place, the Government of M. Venizelos, having decided to go to the help of Serbia, would have reason to thank the Powers for not having delayed the despatch of their troops.

"It was under these conditions that the first Allied troops disembarked at Salonika; and it is for the reasons above explained that, in announcing the disembarkation to the Greek Government, the French Minister made

no reference to the invitation given by the Government, and this in order not to complicate its attitude of neutrality. Here follows the Note referred to:

"'ATHENS,
"'*October 2nd*, 1915.

"'M. LE PRÉSIDENT,

"'At the order of my Government I have the honour to announce to your Excellency the arrival at Salonika of the first contingent of French troops, and to advise you at the same time that France and England, the Allies of Serbia, have sent these troops in order to assist her and to preserve their communications with her; and that these two Powers base their action on the assumption that Greece, who has already given us many evidences of her friendship, will not oppose these measures taken in the interests of Serbia, who is also her own ally.

"'(*Signed*) GUILLEMIN.'

"To this Note the Greek Government replied the same day by a Note in which, in order to preserve her neutrality 'until the moment when the *casus fœderis* shall present itself,' it protested against the decision to disembark Anglo-French troops. But the Government of M. Venizelos, despite this formal protest made in order to preserve its neutrality until the day of Bulgarian aggression against Serbia, regarded with much pleasure the arrival of Anglo-French troops at Salonika; both because it had been decided

to proceed to the assistance of Serbia, and because M. Venizelos was himself convinced that the hour of Bulgarian aggression was imminent. The Greek Government was happy to know that the largest possible number of Anglo-French troops would be concentrated at Salonika on the day when Greece should set out to make war against Bulgaria."

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It soon became impossible for even the most ardent admirers of Bulgaria to doubt any longer her bellicose intentions, and on October 3rd Russia presented an ultimatum at Sofia, in which King Ferdinand's Government was given twenty-four hours to break with the Central Powers and send away the German and Austrian officers from the staffs of the army. The time limit lapsed. Strangely enough, the threat from Greece, hitherto sufficient to restrain Bulgaria's desire to stab Serbia in the back, seemed to have lost its efficacy. It has since become only too evident that, while the Allies and Serbia were left in complete ignorance of King Constantine's decision not to honour the Treaty, Bulgaria had received assurances of some description from Athens which satisfied her that on this occasion she had nothing to fear. Indeed, Dr. Radoslavoff is credited with having declared that he knew that Greece would not intervene if Bulgaria attacked Serbia, and, being certain of that, he was quite at his ease. This knowledge also accounts for the "great perplexity

in Bulgarian circles" in Athens, which was provoked by the Greek mobilisation of September 23rd.

Who was the traitor? The mystery has not yet been fully explained; but M. Gounaris is accused, even by some of his friends, of having seized the occasion, prior to his resignation, to inform the Cabinet at Sofia that Greece would not intervene in favour of Serbia. One of his organs has, indeed, written that "Certainly Bulgaria undertook the campaign with the knowledge that Roumania and Greece would remain neutral. This was even better known to Germany and Austria."

These assurances—a base betrayal of treaty interests—were the culmination of an intrigue upon which we shall dwell later on. M. Venizelos was well aware that a movement was afoot to disown the Greco-Serbian Treaty. Indeed it could hardly have been otherwise, for as early as August 27th, a very influential personage of the Royal entourage had informed me that he felt certain that, however sincere the co-operation between the King and his newly elected Premier might be, it would cease the moment Venizelos showed "any tendency to wish to plunge the country into such risks as might cost Greece her very existence."

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The new crisis between King and Parliament, which had in reality begun on the day of Greek mobilisation, was brought to a head by a memorable speech delivered to Parlia-

ment by M. Venizelos on October 4th. The Greek Chamber is not a particularly imposing edifice from without; inside it is tawdry and unworthy of greater Greece. Its walls, painted in imitation of marble—and common marble at that—look bare rather than cool. The fitments are more useful than ornamental, and the whole "get-up" of the place lacks a certain dignity that we are accustomed to expect in palaces of national assembly. But on this night the material surroundings were blotted out by an atmosphere of feverish anticipation. Political secrets are not easily kept in cities where 250,000 inhabitants support over a dozen newspapers and a crowd of ambitious journalists who specialise in news-gathering of the "keyhole" order, and it was fairly common knowledge that the old-school politicians knew that they had Venizelos with his back to the wall. So from the diplomatic "box" behind the tribune one looked out upon a sea of excited faces. Down below, every seat of the members' benches was occupied; up above, the public galleries were packed to suffocation, and in the inadequate space reserved for the Press, reporters seemed to be sitting on top of one another. And on this occasion, as at all other times of national crisis, amid the crowd one personality stood out as a peer among its fellows—that of Eleutherios Venizelos.

One after another Messrs. Dragoumis, Rallis, Theotokis and Gounaris—all past Prime Ministers—mounted the tribune and protested

against the landing of Allied troops at Salonika, and M. Theotokis fired the powder when he declared that in his opinion the Serbo-Grecian Treaty had ceased to exist when Serbia (under irresistible pressure from the Allies) consented to cede to Bulgaria territories won in the second Balkan war.

This brought the Premier to his feet, and, speaking with an emotion which even he rarely allowed to creep into his parliamentary orations, he defended his policy in a long and masterly speech. He insisted upon the continued validity of the Greco-Serbian Treaty, made caustic strictures on a section of the Athenian Press, and wound up with a declaration which created a European sensation and ended his term of office :

"If the Great Powers, relying on their might, can bring themselves to dishonour treaty obligations, *Greece is too small a State to commit so great an infamy.* Therefore, as soon as Bulgaria mobilised, Greece replied in like manner. Greece has no immediate quarrel with Germany and Austria, BUT IF, IN THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN THE BALKAN PENINSULA, SHE SHOULD FIND HERSELF FACED BY OTHER POWERS, SHE WILL ACT AS HER HONOUR DEMANDS. Such is the policy of the present Government, and to the many arguments which can be put forward in support of it, I would add that it has been approved by the Greek nation at the recent elections."

Demanding a vote of confidence, M. Venizelos found his policy approved by 142 to 102, nine ministers abstaining.

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I believe it to be correct that the German Minister visited the monarch the next day (October 5th) to protest against the Premier's language, and that he then took advantage of the occasion to bring further pressure to bear upon the King's attitude. In any case, His Majesty sent for M. Venizelos, accused him of having gone too far in his speech, and informed him that he could not pursue to the end the policy advocated by the Cabinet, *i.e.* the prospect of hostilities with Austria and Germany. The interview was of a somewhat stormy character, and ended in the resignation of the Premier on what was, for him, a point of honour.

There is much that we have yet to learn concerning this second dismissal of M. Venizelos, but two facts stand out clearly. The first is that King Constantine, even previous to signing the decree of mobilisation, had made up his mind not to fight against Germany, even if she was joined by Bulgaria. The second is that he was greatly assisted in carrying through his intention by the activities of the German propaganda, which created a propitious terrain for the application of a personal and anti-Venizelist policy.

CHAPTER VII

GREECE AND THE SERBIAN TREATY

FOLLOWING the resignation of M. Venizelos, King Constantine invited M. Zaimis (an honest but politically colourless statesman) to form a Ministry. With the exception of the Premier himself and Admiral Condouriotis, the new Cabinet was composed of ardent anti-Venizelists, but it was, nevertheless, promised the support of the Liberal majority, M. Venizelos being desirous of avoiding any complication of the national situation at such a momentous epoch.

On October 11th M. Zaimis met the Chamber and declared that his policy would be "founded on the same principles which Greek policy has followed since the beginning of the European War" (*i.e.* benevolent neutrality toward the Allies), and added: "The better to assure the vital interests of the nation, our neutrality as regards the present will be armed. Our attitude in the future will be adapted to events, the course of which will be followed with close attention."

In reply M. Venizelos made a powerful speech in which he stated that, although in his opinion the right of Parliament to manage

the nation's affairs had been usurped, his party did not intend to create any difficulties for the Government in such extremely difficult times. He asserted that a conflict between Greece and Bulgaria was inevitable, and that, apart from any question of the Greco-Serbian treaty, Greece should hasten to defend Serbia against Bulgarian aggression, both in her own immediate interests and in order to preserve the balance of power in the Balkans. Finally, he warned the Government to take heed lest, as a result of inaction, Greece should be reduced to less than her existing frontiers.

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It will now be instructive to examine the rival interpretations of the Greco-Serbian Treaty. That document has not yet been published, and though, as one who had much to do with its inception and development, I have a general acquaintance with its terms, I feel that it will be preferable to refrain entirely from citation rather than give an incomplete *résumé*. The various arguments advanced are, however, sufficient in themselves to give a fairly comprehensive idea of its scope.

The Zaimis Ministry issued two diplomatic Notes on the subject (the first of October 13th in reply to Serbia's demand that Greece should honour her engagements, and the second of October 22nd in reply to a similar request from Sir Edward Grey) and, in addition, the partisans of neutrality rushed into speech and print in support of their contentions. From

this flood of written and spoken eloquence we may summarise the reasons which, in the opinion of the neutralists, justified Greece in going back on her repeated declarations that a Bulgarian attack on Serbia would supply a *casus fœderis*.

1. The first and principal argument invoked was the alleged exclusively Balkanic character of the Alliance. According to reports published in the French Press, M. Zaimis, in answer to the Serbian Note of October 13th, stated that—

"The Treaty of Alliance and the Military Convention annexed to it prove that the contracting parties had in view only the hypothesis of an eventual attack against one of them by Bulgaria. Article 4 of the Military Convention itself furnishes itself the proof of this argument, for, with the intention of limiting the assistance to be rendered by one of the Allies already otherwise occupied, it foresaw no other *casus fœderis* than the attack of Bulgaria against the other Ally.

"In no part of the document is there question of a concerted attack by two or more Allied Powers. On the contrary, however comprehensive in its terms may be the general character of Article 1 of the Military Convention, it limits itself to the hypothesis of a war between one of the two Allied States and a single other Power. It could not be otherwise. It would have been an act of presumptuous folly to stipulate for the mani-

festly powerless assistance of the armed forces of the other Ally in the case of one of the parties being at war with several States at the same time. It cannot be doubted that this hypothesis is precisely that with which we are faced to-day. If the Bulgarian aggression feared by the Serbian Government actually becomes a *fait accompli*, it will be the result of a concerted understanding with Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. It will take place in combination with the attack already commenced by the two Central Empires. It will present itself as an episode of the European War."

The same reason was advanced in the reply to Sir Edward Grey's Note of October 22nd, and King Constantine also put forward the theory in several conversations with me.

Now although it is possible that M. Zaimis may have lacked knowledge of the *pourparlers* which preceded the signature of the Treaty, it is the fact that the very point he raised had actually been the subject of protracted discussion. On the Greek side there was made a determined attempt to exclude Austria from the scope of the agreement. The idea was not very logical, for its acceptance would have presumed that Serbia, finding herself at war with Austria, would have been obliged to assist Greece if the latter were attacked by Bulgaria, whereas, on the other hand, it would have absolved Greece from liability in the eventuality of Serbia being

simultaneously attacked by Austria and Bulgaria—exactly the case at issue. However, so dangerous for Hellenic interests was the Bulgarian menace in 1913, that Greece gave way, and a compromise was reached. That compromise specially freed Greece from liability under the Treaty if hostilities followed upon the then existing Austro-Serbian dispute with regard to a Serbian outlet upon the Adriatic. It would appear, therefore, that the Treaty really did envisage a possible intervention by Austria, and that this hypothesis was not only discussed, but reservations with regard to it, which did not apply in 1915, were included in the agreement. To this it may be recalled that up to the summer of 1915 all Greek Governments, including that of M. Gounaris, had plainly declared that, in the event of hostile action by Bulgaria against Serbia, Greece would step in to assist her ally in accordance with the conditions of the Greco-Serbian Alliance.

2. In the Greek Note to Serbia of October 13th, 1915, a point was made of the fact that Serbia had been the first to break off Serbo-Bulgarian diplomatic relations.

True, the Alliance was defensive in character, but even so, the rupture of diplomatic relations, particularly when Serbia was obviously disinclined to "provoke" hostilities with Bulgaria, signified neither a declaration of war nor a desire to precipitate hostilities. The argument, at its best, is purely judicial and of little value at that.

3. A further reason advanced for the non-observance of the Treaty was the alleged refusal of Serbia to assist Greece in May 1914, when King Constantine's Cabinet contemplated war with Turkey.

These negotiations are now nearly thirty months old, and I quote from memory, but am fairly sure of my ground, when I state that there was no refusal whatever. Greece was then very much agitated about the attitude of Turkey. The point of view of the Porte with regard to the Ægean Islands occupied by Greece in 1912 was very unsatisfactory, and hundreds of thousands of Hellenes were being persecuted and driven from their homes and properties in Asia Minor. Greece contemplated war with Turkey, and asked the Belgrade Government whether, if hostilities brought in Bulgaria, Serbia would be prepared to fulfil her obligations under the Treaty. In reply, M. Pashitch, pointing out that the Serbian army was in a disorganised state and in every respect unfitted for war, strongly advised the Greek Government to avoid an appeal to arms; but, at the same time, he informed the Porte that Serbia would not remain indifferent in the event of a conflict. In any case, the argument is purely hypothetical, for the *casus fœderis* never arose.

4. The fourth and only valid excuse was that elaborated by M. Gounaris in the Greek Chamber on October 4th, and subsequently embodied in the reply to Sir Edward Grey of the 22nd. The Military Convention an-

nexed to the Treaty (of which it was an essential part) called upon Serbia to place an army of 150,000 men against Bulgaria.[1] It was on this point, of course, that M. Venizelos appealed to the Allies; only to find them totally unprepared for the eventuality.

Nevertheless, the Greek "Interventionists" do not admit the validity of this neutralist argument. They hold that even this condition was fulfilled, because on October 5th Serbia had 120,000 men opposed to Bulgaria, while on the same date the Anglo-French forces disembarked at Salonika amounted to 22,000, making a combined total at that early date of 142,000.

Colonel Metaxas, of the Greek General Staff, subsequently drew up a further list of reasons to prove that Serbia had herself previously destroyed the Treaty. These, however, are not worthy of consideration, both because they are at best mere excuses, and because if Serbia had really broken the Treaty in pre-European War days, it should have

[1] I believe that these troops were to be concentrated on a specified front, but am not quite clear on that point. It is quite obvious, however, that if Greece had really desired to join in, the Military Convention could have been altered in this respect. Indeed, it would have been to the advantage of both Allies for Stepanovitch's second Serbian army to remain practically where Voivode Putnik had placed it. It was to discuss such matters of detail that Colonel Milovanovitch, of the Serbian Staff, was sent to Athens. He remained there for some time, being put off by the Greek Staff from day to day on the ground that the question of Greek intervention was a "political matter which would be settled in about a week." He finally left Athens convinced that nothing was to be expected from the Greek Government.

been denounced. Far from taking this course, successive Greek Governments, as we have already noted more than once, insisted that it was very much in existence.

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The reader must now form his own opinion as to whether or not the Greco-Serbian Treaty was a valid document when Bulgaria entered Serbian territory, and whether the intervention of Bulgaria provided a *casus fœderis*. M. Venizelos himself not only regarded it as a binding engagement, but declared that, all question of the Alliance apart, Greece's own particular interests rendered imperative her participation. He denounced the betrayal of Serbia in the harshest possible terms.

But as a matter of fact, the Greco-Serbian Alliance had nothing to do with King Constantine's attitude. The document was there, and it had to be explained away somehow. His Majesty was actuated solely by his own conception of the military situation, which he regarded from the angle of the man who considers self-preservation to be the supreme law of life.

King Constantine had a policy, and it was rather in the elaboration of the same that the influences around him made, almost unnoticed, for pro-Germanism. Let me again explain precisely what these influences were. He had received his military education in Germany, and nobody to whom he has shown the Field-Marshal's baton presented to him

by the Kaiser can doubt his admiration for the Prussian military machine. His political adviser was Dr. Georges Streit, a perfect gentleman of Bavarian origin who admired Teutonism, favoured autocratic as opposed to democratic methods of government, and shared the German hatred of the Slav. His military counsellors were General Dousmanis and Colonel Metaxas, the one violently anti-French and a confirmed bureaucrat, and the other a brilliant product of the Berlin Military Academy. Though Queen Sophie was a sister of the Kaiser, her influence was more marked in the creation of a pro-German environment at Court than by direct action upon her husband himself.

The political vista of this entourage was governed by seven well-defined political assumptions:

1. That the European War would end in a stalemate. They refused to believe either that the Allies could beat Germany or that Germany could conquer Britain.

2. That when Greece fought, it must be in a Balkan and not in a European war. They therefore desired to avoid conflict with Britain and France on the one side and with Germany or Austria on the other.

3. That Greek interests would be best served by her remaining on terms of friendship with the European factors in both sets of belligerents.

4. That while a Bulgarian hegemony in the Balkans would be disagreeable, the aggran-

disement of Serbia might prove a not unmixed blessing.

5. That the annexation by Russia of Constantinople and the Dardanelles was not desirable from a Hellenic standpoint.

6. That sooner or later Britain and Germany would unite against Slavdom.

7. That Venizelos was a menace to the Throne, and to all whose personal or political advancement depended upon the Royal pleasure.

Briefly put, therefore, the Royal policy anticipated an indecisive peace in Europe, and sought to maintain neutrality until the end, when the entire Greek forces, thus preserved, would be able to fall upon a battered Bulgarian army and register a crushing victory for Hellenism. It desired the continued existence of a strong Germany as a guarantee against Slavism from without and a protection against an inconvenient development of democracy from within. And it must always be remembered that the most prominent supporters of the Crown were intent, perhaps above all else, on securing the downfall of M. Venizelos.

This policy, if policy it can be called, was, of course, hopeless and impracticable for a variety of reasons; but it suited the German scheme admirably. The Kaiser no doubt calculated that by the time its impracticality had been demonstrated, his own object would have been accomplished. His immediate concern was to assure himself of Greek neutrality when Bulgaria attacked Serbia, and, though

the popularity of M. Venizelos blocked him on several occasions, he triumphed immediately he was able to demonstrate that Greece had everything to lose by intervention and something to gain by remaining neutral. Then, with Bulgaria on his side, a junction made with Turkey, and Serbia crushed, he would have Greece at his mercy and Roumania in a cleft stick.

King Constantine did not abrogate the Greco-Serbian Alliance because Serbia had cautioned prudence in May 1914, but because immediately he knew that Austro-German armies in sufficient strength would attack Serbia in the face while Bulgaria dug a treacherous dagger in her back, he believed that our ally would be defeated whether he tried to save her or not. That being the case, flaws had to be found in the Treaty. Had he been wise, he would have avoided legal quibbles and simply informed the Allies that as they, with all their resources, had failed to support Serbia, they could hardly expect Greece to do it for them. Though such an attitude would not have absolved him from moral responsibility, it would at least have been preferable to disappearance behind a barricade of sophistry.

It must be remembered that His Hellenic Majesty took a very bold step in defying M. Venizelos and the constitutionally elected representatives of his people. To do it once, as had happened in February, was perhaps under the circumstances a winning hazard;

but to repeat the performance after the Liberal leader had gone to the country and returned with a substantial majority was a risk of considerable magnitude. His justification depended upon his ability to prove that intervention would have entailed Greece in a disaster only comparable to that which actually overtook Serbia. In this he was assisted by the anti-Venizelists and, naturally enough, the German propaganda, which saw in this occasion a never-to-be-renewed opportunity to attain its object—the political death of Venizelos.

I do not think that we can yet say with absolute certainty whether, seeing that the Allies had failed to take precautions against the Austro-Germano-Bulgarian invasion of Serbia, Greece could have saved her ally. It will suffice, therefore, to cite the arguments presented by the two sides.

The Royalists based their calculations upon the information furnished by that ardent Germanophile M. Theotokis, Greek Minister at Berlin, and valued Mackensen's forces at the fantastic total of anything from 500,000 to 800,000 men according to taste and imagination. To this they added from 350,000 to 500,000 Bulgars and a like number of Turks. In his Note to Sir Edward Grey, M. Zaimis reported that, according to foreign specialists, 400,000 men would be needed for a successful Balkan expedition, and all were united in declaring that it was impossible for the Allies to organise a Balkan army strong enough to

keep the Teutono-Bulgar forces in check. Deduction made, Greece would have exposed her country to devastation without the slightest possibility of rendering effective aid to Serbia.

As a matter of actual fact, the Austro-Germans appear to have engaged some 250,000 men against the Serbs. We may assume the Bulgarian contingent at about 350,000 (a covering force must necessarily have been left on the Roumanian frontier), and, as far as is known, no Turks whatever were employed.

On his part, M. Venizelos was persuaded that the Greco-Serbian armies, combined with the Anglo-French reinforcements, would have been able to oppose successfully the enemy advance. At a later date he ably summed up his view of the situation in the *Kiryx*, from which we quote as follows:

"If we take into consideration the Austro-German forces which, as we already know, were employed against Serbia, we may say that, in all probability, the Serbo-Greek army, aided by the Anglo-French reinforcements, even if these reinforcements arrived slowly, could have succeeded in crushing the Bulgarian army before the Central Empires had time to aid the latter by sending larger reinforcements. For it must be remembered that there existed an important factor of superiority in favour of the Greek army as opposed to the Bulgarian troops, and in favour of the Serbian army as

opposed to the Bulgars and Austrians; namely, their *moral*, which had been so much raised in consequence of their recent victories, whereas the Bulgarian *moral* must have been very low, at the outset of operations, because of their defeat in 1913. And when considering the probable issue of the operations, it must also be remembered that if, during one month, communications could be prevented between the Austro-Germans and the Bulgars, the latter would be completely deprived of ammunition, since they had at their disposal only 450 shells per cannon. From the point of view of ammunition, the Turks were also in the same position.

"But even if by chance the Bulgarian army had not been crushed before the new Austro-German reinforcements arrived, it is absolutely certain that our participation in the war would have saved the Serbian army from the disaster it underwent for having, on one hand, opposed superior forces on two fronts, and above all for having, on account of the cutting off of its communications with Salonika and with the Anglo-French forces advancing to its aid from that side, been rendered powerless to retire towards the south and unite with those forces; it was therefore obliged to make its retreat, in the depths of winter, across the inhospitable mountains of Albania, and from this cause to undergo losses much greater than those of the battlefield. Our participation would have spared the Serbian army all that, for it would have assured the union of the

Serbian with the Greek army, and made it possible for the former, in case superior forces had caused it to retreat, to retire towards the south, either by the Vardar valley or, by a still safer and less dangerous route, by Monastir, without risk of being surrounded. Under the worst conditions, the Greek, Serbian, and Anglo-French troops, remaining almost intact, with only those losses which they had incurred during the battles (which losses would be exactly the same as those of the enemy), would thus have succeeded in retiring on to Greek territory; having reached the frontier and fortified themselves, they would have represented a force of 700,000 men and more than half a million bayonets. The enemy, no matter what number of forces which operations on the other fronts allowed them to dispose of, would have found it technically impossible to concentrate on the Greek frontier against the Serbo-Greek-Anglo-French troops, not only superior forces, but even numerically equal ones—far from it—for the simple reason that they lacked the means of transport for providing sufficient victuals and munitions for such a great army. Whereas the Serbo-Greek and Anglo-French armies, having at Salonika an admirable base for supplies, and three railways from Salonika to the Greek frontiers and beyond, were in possession of all the means for abundant supplies.

"The very nature of things would have made it impossible for this supremacy to be destroyed. Hellenic territory, therefore,

would have been assured against all hostile invasion."

M. Venizelos put the political issue before Parliament in a concise little speech delivered on October 12th, 1915.

"Suppose," he said, "that the Treaty does not exist, and I ask is it possible to doubt even for an instant that the basis of our foreign policy must be the maintenance at any cost of the equilibrium established at Bucharest? Can we permit the annihilation of Serbia by Bulgaria, who will then occupy a position of preponderance in the Balkans? We know that Bulgaria's ambitions are directed above all to our frontiers, because our Macedonian lands are richer than those belonging to other Balkan peoples. Therefore I ask: when we have such a neighbour, is it possible to imagine that war with her can be avoided? To ask such a question is to answer it. In consequence, shall we await the annihilation of Serbia in order that our principal rival may annihilate us in our turn, when we find ourselves without allies, without friends?"

M. Venizelos desired to safeguard the honour of Greece; he laid great stress upon participation in order that Hellas might obtain a voice at the Peace Conference, and now, as in February, he was loath to let slip the glorious opportunities for territorial expansion which opened up. These, indeed, were more magnifi-

cent than ever before. Bulgaria was at war with the Entente, the Allies had received a bitter lesson, and they were ready not only to guarantee the integrity of Greece, but to promise her the cession of Bulgarian Thrace and an important slice of Asia Minor. As a final inducement Britain threw in Cyprus—a futile offer, but it must be placed upon the credit side of intervention. It is, however, doubtful whether the bait of the whole of Bulgaria would have been sufficient to make King Constantine budge from the intransigent attitude he had taken up. He was profoundly impressed by the lack of foresight exhibited by the Allies, and was doubtless beginning to wonder whether even he himself had not underestimated the strength of Prussian militarism.

The only possible remedy at the time would have been supplied by an adaptation of the policy advocated by Sir Edward Carson in his letter to Mr. Asquith, dated October 12th, 1915. "As regards Greece," he wrote, "I think vigorous efforts should be made to compel her to fulfil her treaty obligations—I would not hesitate to inform her that, unless she is prepared to continue her policy of joining with the Allies in the defence of Serbia, we will break off friendly relations."

I suggest an "adaptation" of this policy, because our attitude should have been, not to try directly to force King Constantine's hand in the matter of intervention, but to insist upon his acting in accordance with the

clearly expressed will of a constitutionally elected House of Parliament.

In June 1916 we blockaded Greece in order to force a restoration of constitutional government. We based our action on certain clearly expressed "rights." But the same "rights" were in existence in October 1915, and it was then that occurred that breach of constitutional government which ultimately forced us to make use of them. In short, we hesitated for nine months, during which time Serbia was destroyed and the value of the Greek army rendered problematic, while the Allies were called upon to send nearly half a million men to Salonika.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PERSONAL RÉGIME

M. VENIZELOS's resignation in October was more than a protest against the King's refusal to accept his policy; it was a revolt against what he considered a flagrant violation of the spirit, if not the actual letter, of the Greek Constitution. The Monarch, on his part, told me that he possessed the power to dissolve Parliament whenever it so pleased him, always provided that he considered it necessary in the interests of the nation. Further, as M. Venizelos has recently reminded us, His Majesty claimed to exercise the Divine Right of Kings in regarding himself as responsible before God for the external policy of his country. Such an attitude has already cost more than one king his throne (and head), and all who know Greece and her history are aware not only that it is a dangerous theory, but that it is totally opposed to the spirit of the "republican monarchy" which the Hellenes have won for themselves by a whole series of revolutions. The King's action could have been justified only by success—the result has been disaster.

One can well imagine that the Cretan statesman's first impulse was to declare war on the Throne and re-establish at once the right of the people to govern themselves. But so conscious was he of the critical situation in which his country was placed that, although M. Zaimis's Ministry included such bitter political opponents as Messrs. Gounaris, Dragoumis, Theotokis, and Rallis, he promised the support of his majority, probably in the hope that Greece would yet repent and take the pathway to national honour and glory.

As will have been observed from his speech of October 12th, he continued to advertise his point of view with ever-increasing passion and eloquence. But in face of the determined attitude of the King he could make little headway.

This was in very large measure due to the extraordinary progress which had been made by the German propaganda. The anti-Venizelists and the Germans (who had cloaked their real intention beneath a garb of anti-Venizelism and Royalism) found themselves deprived of their principal weapon when the King consented to mobilise; but when His Majesty subsequently disagreed with M. Venizelos, all their pent-up activity broke loose. Exploiting the neutralist arguments, which we have already analysed, they claimed that the Liberal leader had not hesitated to propose the ruin of Greece in pursuance of his personal ambition; they exaggerated the military

danger out of all recognition, and held up the Ruler as the saviour of the country. This, added to unpatriotic appeals to the personal comfort of the Reservists, gave the King a "following" upon which he could lean for the support of his policy. Here, of course, we reaped the reward of having left the field open to Baron von Schenk and his acolytes. Only four of the Athenian newspapers remained true to Venizelos and the Entente, and a similar success had attended German methods in the provinces. Without this assistance, King Constantine could never have defied the parliamentary majority.

Inside and outside of Parliament the Gounarist party now worked with might and main to precipitate a crisis, for they believed that they, as the self-elected apostles of the King, could defeat M. Venizelos on what they intended to make a straight issue between the Throne and the ex-Premier. These efforts met with no success until, on November 4th, a sensational incident precipitated by General Yanaketsis, the Minister of War, drove M. Venizelos to join issue with him, and the Zaimist Government was defeated by 147 votes to 114. The occasion, insignificant in itself, was deliberately provoked by the minority, but M. Venizelos seized upon it to denounce the attitude of the Cabinet, declaring that they were unconsciously leading the country to ruin. In the course of a long speech of censure, in which he reviewed the rival policies advocated by himself and the Government,

he declared that the Government knew well that it had only been existing on sufferance, due principally to the fact that the Venizelists were well aware that "if the Government were overthrown it would order new elections, and for that purpose demobilise the army, thereby exposing the country to a grave danger for which the Opposition might then have been blamed by the nation."

Continuing, the ex-Premier was engaged in warning the Cabinet against the Bulgarian danger, when a deputy rose to ask him whether he considered that the King was pursuing a policy that would ruin the country. This was a favourite trick of the anti-Venizelists. For their own party ends they persistently strove to make the issue a personal conflict between the King and Venizelos, and they attempted to stifle criticism of their misdeeds by the same process. I remember once listening to a very sound *exposé* of the military situation in the Balkans as it affected Greece, by an exceedingly able Greek soldier. He reasoned with such logic that I felt compelled to ask him why he did not place his views before his brother officers. His reply was instructive in its reflection upon the Royalist organisation which had been built up in Greece: "Whenever I commence to expound my views in the presence of my comrades, it is not long before one of them rises and says, 'Are we to understand that you are a better judge of Hellenic interests than the King?' In this manner I am

silenced, and believe me, hundreds of others who are persuaded that we are drifting to destruction have had similar experience. We have to choose between absolute submission at double pay and protest with a loss of rank and possible starvation." That officer is, of course, now fighting in the ranks of the National Army.

M. Venizelos did not attempt to evade the issue, and his answer shed further light upon the constitutional dispute. He pointed out immediately that his interpolator had made use of an anti-parliamentary phrase, because, according to the Constitution, the King was "irresponsible" and had no policy. The misfortune was that Greece had not enjoyed constitutional liberty since the last change of Government. Further, the King was a distinguished strategist, but he had had no experience in political matters and no opportunity of exercising power in the manner of a responsible statesman.

This reference to the rôle of the Throne was, of course, dished up by the anti-Venizelist Press as a studied insult to King Constantine, and when it was followed by the defeat of the Government, M. Gounaris thought that his day of triumph was at hand. But, although M. Zaimis declined to continue in office, the King, doubtless recognising the absurdity of holding elections while the army was mobilised, quashed the ambition of the Gounarists and called upon M. Skouloudis, a non-party man and an opponent of M. Venizelos, to form a

new Ministry. This included practically all the members of the defeated Cabinet.

The defeat of M. Zaimis saw the end of constitutional government in Greece. Henceforth the internal and external policy of the Cabinet was that elaborated by the King, Dr. Streit, and the General Staff, into whose hands all power had passed. M. Skouloudis, whom nature has not endowed with any marked diplomatic talent, was merely the mouthpiece of the Palace clique, and, under admittedly provocative circumstances, a certain want of tact quickly brought him to loggerheads with the Entente representatives. No sooner was he clear of one difficulty than he launched into another.

The Chamber was sent on holiday, and the King, probably realising that his policy would be subject to continual interference while a Venizelist majority remained, finally snapped his fingers at the Constitution and ordered new elections for December 19th.

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In the meantime, the attitude of the Greek people was one of hesitation. They were anxious to see what steps the Allies would take to save Serbia from the fate which daily threatened her with increasing gravity, and, despite a conditional blockade which had been imposed upon them, accorded a rousing reception to two Entente envoys in the persons of Lord Kitchener and M. Denys Cochin. On November 8th M. Venizelos made his posi-

tion clear to a representative of the British Press:

"I am not a strategist," he said, "but two things seem quite clear to me. First, that the Germans are bound to be conquered in the end, from the fact that the reserves from which they are drawing their resources are much smaller than those at the disposal of the Allies. The Germans, in fact, have already passed the zenith of their strength, though they are still powerful enough to prolong the struggle for a long time.

"Secondly, it seems to me that this new battleground in the Balkans offers favourable conditions to the Allies. Their position in the West must be strong enough for them to hold on there and at the same time detail large bodies of troops for use here in the Balkans. There are several advantages that would result from developing this Balkan campaign on a large scale.

"It is important, for one thing, that you should cut off Germany from the supplies of men and minerals that are waiting for her in Turkey, and the moral effect upon Greece and Roumania of an Allied success in the Balkans would be considerable. Moreover, if the Allies succeed in smashing the Germans in Serbia there is a line of invasion into their enemies' territory open to them across the Hungarian plain—Germany's weakest flank.

"A German reverse in the Balkans, too, would have most serious effects for them at

home. The German people have been promised so much and have been so often disappointed—first Paris, then Calais, then the surrender of Russia after the taking of Warsaw ; and if this new enterprise, with its much-trumpeted aim of opening the road to Egypt, turns out to be but another failure, the results in the interior of Germany may well be disastrous."

M. Venizelos spoke, too, of the great effect the German propaganda in the Balkans had had upon Greek public opinion. As a result of this campaign the Germans, he said, who started with public opinion against them, had gained greatly, while the Allies, who had the sympathies of the Greek people, had lost ground.

" Thanks to German propaganda in Greece," said the ex-Premier, " a great part of the Greek people, while still ardently desiring the victory of the Allies, believe not that Germany will win, but that she has won already.

" I have the greatest admiration for Sir Edward Grey," added M. Venizelos, " and when I was in office had the most cordial relations with him, but I feel that it was a mistake to chill Greek sympathies by offering Kavalla to the Bulgarians without at any rate first ascertaining whether they would accept the bribe. As for the offer of Cyprus to Greece," he went on, " the feeling of the mass of the Greek people is that it would be too great a

risk to accept Cyprus under conditions of a co-operation which, in their opinion, as I have said, might lead to the forfeiture of most of the rest of their territory."

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The Liberal party decided to abstain from the new elections unless the army was demobilised. "This mobilisation," declared M. Venizelos, "furnishes the present Government with a reliable weapon for creating a situation in accordance with its own interests, since only its own supporters will be granted furlough for electoral purposes." He further declared the internal policy of Greece to be "unconstitutional" and openly denied the King's right to dissolve the Chamber twice running and after the Greek people had pronounced unmistakably in favour of his party.

M. Venizelos maintained his determination to ignore the elections and ordered his followers to adopt the same line of conduct, and a Gounarist majority was returned by about one-third of the electorate. The remaining two-thirds abstained from the polling. This result was claimed as a great victory by both the Venizelists and the anti-Venizelists; but it provided the King with a very humble and obedient Chamber which gratefully approved every act of a Ministry which was nothing more nor less than an instrument of the Palace. Next to M. Gounaris, M. Rallis obtained most supporters, and as neither of these politicians (they are not statesmen) was or is able to

tolerate the success of the other, M. Skouloudis was retained as Prime Minister and keeper of the peace in the Cabinet.

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The tragic failure of the Allies to relieve Serbia and the fact that General Sarrail had by this time been driven back on to the last defences before Salonika, put any thought of Greek intervention out of the question; and, while M. Skouloudis's tenure of the Foreign Office continued to be a record of constant friction with the Allies, M. Venizelos lay low and organised in preparation for the great day when General Sarrail should be strong enough to commence his forward march. His enemies were not lacking in ingenuity. Every hardship inflicted upon Greece, every humiliation imposed upon her (and there were many of both), was laid to his charge. No matter how the Allies were attacked for the destruction of the Demir Hissar bridge, the bombing of Greek troops, and the occupation of Corfu and other islands, the anger always came home to roost upon the head of Venizelos.

Yet he maintained a remarkable hold upon the affections of the people. The Government had to reckon with the opposition directed from his modest little flat in University Street quite as seriously as if the statesman had been leading his forces in Parliament, and they were, moreover, themselves unable to judge in any practical degree as to what portion of the electorate which stayed at home on Decem-

ber 19th was actually supporting the outside broker. In his flat M. Venizelos himself lived, moved, and had his being. Its chambers were hives of political activity. Ex-Cabinet Ministers and secretaries buzzed in and out like so many busy bees intent on rebuilding a hive that somebody had damaged and restoring to it its treasures of comb and honey.

On his "name-day"—the Greeks, like all Orthodox peoples, celebrate the anniversary of their patron saint in preference to their own—I stood by his side for an hour or more in a study transformed into Arcadia by the floral tributes of his supporters. There were bowers of camellias, of roses and palms and ivy—the emblem of his party—and there streamed by an endless procession of ardent followers, all come to testify their devotion to him and his cause. As this crowd, representing all phases of Athenian life, filed past and seized his outstretched hand, generally with a frustrated attempt to press it to their lips, there was no doubting the enormous influence which this magnetic figure exercised over the hearts of his adherents. Like King Constantine, he is a born leader. The Government Press facetiously calls him the "Messiah," and, so far as many of his followers are concerned, the expression is so near to the truth as to be merely an exaggeration.

During this day the King drove twice past the street that held the waiting queue. His mission, like that of the Palace spies who mingled in the throng, was to gauge the

strength of the enemy. What a day it would have been for Hellas had the Monarch entered within and shaken the hand of the man with whose collaboration and through whose tireless efforts he had doubled Greece! Here were the Hellenes dissipating their energy in personal strife while the world was in convulsions. From top to bottom Athens was split into two camps. The people were divided; society was rent in twain. Even the foreign Legations had ranged themselves on one side or the other. Few people, either Greeks or strangers, were able to take a middle course, and, so far as the opponents of Venizelos were concerned, any stick, were it the King or Ententophobism, was good enough to beat him with. Every untoward incident was either an aftermath of the Cretan's ruinous interventionist schemes or the result of the Government's misguided abstentionist policy, according to the colour of the paper one read. All this might have been relegated to the limbo of the past; but King Constantine passed by on the other side. The few soldiers who had the courage to visit an old friend were arrested and suffered detention for "mixing in politics"—this at a time when the General Staff itself dominated a political party within the State.

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Sharp as was the political division, it should not be assumed that every anti-Venizelist was necessarily a pro-German. There existed a

large party of neutralists who assumed that the Great War must end in victory for the Allies. They calculated that the conflict would be long, hesitated as to the completeness of our triumph, but were persuaded that Britain and her friends would win out in Europe. What principally concerned them, however, was the Balkan Peninsula. They were by no means sure that we should carry our flag to victory there. From their view-point, precedent was against us. There was the ghastly failure of the Gallipoli expedition, undertaken against the advice of the Greek staff and most other people who knew anything about the place. There was the double failure in Serbia —the one to block the German junction with Constantinople and the other to succour our Serbian Allies. They feared Germany and knew she would devastate their land with the same ruthless hand as had laid waste Belgium. You could not make them fear Britain in similar manner. Even General Dousmanis said to me one day: "It's no good your telling me you would bombard Greek towns—you couldn't do it."

"And why?" I queried.

"Well, because you're great and we're small, and your national character won't allow you to play the bully."

Your genuine neutralist believed that if Greece had joined Serbia before the arrival of sufficient Allied troops, she would have been likewise destroyed; and his conviction carried him farther when he added that, with the

Serbian forces dispersed and the whole Bulgarian army, the bulk of the Turkish army, and the Teuton Balkan army all free to fall on Greece's northern frontier if she moved, the Greek forces combined with the Allies would have proved insufficient to avert disaster. Add to these theorists a second group whose pro-Ally sympathies had been damped by Entente diplomacy, a third who did not want war at any price, a fourth who represented anti-Venizelism, and a fifth who stood for pro-Germanism pure and simple, and you have the sum total of the forces which M. Venizelos was called upon to fight.

Yet in view of the menace to Hellenic interests entailed by the obliteration of the Serbian State and the enormous territorial increase of Bulgaria, it should have been obvious to every Greek that it was necessary for his country to quit neutrality and join the Allies in a war of reconquest immediately that operation could be envisaged with reasonable confidence. This moment can be approximately regarded as the date upon which General Sarrail's army plus the Greek forces would be able to undertake a successful offensive. At the beginning of this year I calculated that this situation would be supplied in the early spring, and I therefore submitted a Memorandum to King Constantine in which, after examining the results of the Royal policy, I made certain recommendations for the future. I quote the principal points from my letter, which was dated January 16th, 1915:

"It was in the mutual interests of Britain and Greece to pull together, the future of Greece being in large measure bound up in the prosperity of Britain.

"The indifference to territorial extension announced by the King and Staff did not represent the opinion of the majority of the Greeks.

"Bulgaria was striving for Balkan hegemony, and if she emerged victorious Greece would be reduced to servility.

"If Greece desired to be the bulwark of Britain in the Orient (as had been suggested), she must march with us while yet she could be useful.

"Continued and unconditional neutrality might lead to the loss of Kavalla, and possibly also of Salonika and Kastoria, together with parts of northern Epirus.

"Bulgaria might sue for a separate peace when the Allies advanced up the Vardar and cut her off from Central Macedonia.

"The Allies would require, if anything, the strongest and best-equipped Greek army possible, ready to advance when *they* were ready, not before. This could be assured by demobilising half the army under arms and calling up new classes for training."

I put forward a threefold objection to a continuance of unconditional neutrality:

"1. You would find yourself at the head of an army no stronger than it is at present,

no better equipped, and ruined by pernicious inactivity under the colours.

"2. You run two risks: (*a*) That Bulgaria will make common cause with us in the meantime. (*b*) That we, having ignored Greek co-operation in the elaboration of our plans, may turn round and tell you that we prefer to carry the job through ourselves in order not to complicate peace negotiations and for other reasons.

"3. If we know that you are coming in under certain conditions, . . . you can ask for and obtain much better terms than if you put off until we can afford to treat your offers with indifference."

I then suggested the following policy to His Majesty:

"1. Transform the protestations of benevolent neutrality which you have given to the Entente into a binding guarantee. Give these Powers clearly to understand that under no conditions will you commit any act of hostility against them.

"2. Let it be known that when a satisfactory military situation has been created in Macedonia (to be established by a military convention), you will be ready to co-operate with us.

"3. Bring back M. Zaimis with a neutralist programme."

The Memorandum, as a whole, presented a

favourable proposition for Greece, perhaps more favourable than the Entente Powers would have been prepared to agree to, yet it failed to move King Constantine from the attitude which he had taken up. As a matter of fact, the King and his Staff cherished two ideas: (1) That General Sarrail's armies would be driven into the Gulf of Salonika. (2) That nothing serious would be done in the Balkans for some time, as both Viscount Grey and the British Staff were opposed to the expedition. Facts have disproved the first, and, at the time of writing, we are still waiting for them to disprove the second. In any case, as I suggested to Dr. Streit at a later date (June 3rd):

"If the Allies should feel that their best interests will be served by merely holding the Salonika hinterland and immobilising the Bulgarian army while they put forward a supreme effort elsewhere (and you know, as I do, that that policy has not lacked supporters in England, for reasons which are not difficult to understand), they thereby create another situation. We should then have to consider whether you can risk a peace leaving us with the *status quo* in the Balkans, including an increased Bulgarian penetration in Macedonia, or whether it would not be in your interests to induce the Allies to send the additional men and equipment necessary to permit of a successful campaign by the combined Allied and Greek forces against

Bulgaria. At first sight, it appears that a period of stagnation under existing circumstances, when your territory and aspirations are frittering away bit by bit, might provide Greece with a disagreeable *fait accompli* at the Peace Conference, where you would be unrepresented."

In short, looking at the situation from a purely Hellenic standpoint, it was evident in the summer of this year—by which time there was reason to think that the Salonika expedition was being "starved"—that King Constantine should have endeavoured to force the pace in the Balkans. This had been rendered necessary in Hellenic interests. The King himself considered that Entente diplomacy was still in love with Bulgaria, Bulgarophile intrigues were alleged to be afoot in some of the Allied capitals, and Passaroff, the Bulgarian Minister in Athens, had declared: "*Vous verrez qu'à la fin l'Angleterre nous aidera.*" Far from providing justification for the Royal policy of neutrality, these facts, or beliefs, or whatever they may be deemed, presented in themselves good and sufficient reason for immediate action. Wise statesmanship would at once have offered the co-operation of the Greek forces on the clear understanding that the business of beating Bulgaria should be forthwith taken in hand seriously.

. . . . .

During the whole of the period following

upon the elections of December 19th, 1915, when King Constantine obtained his subservient and unopposed majority in the Chamber, he exercised an uncontrolled authority in the country which manifested itself not only in the application of a "personal policy" in foreign affairs, but in the introduction of a despotic *régime*, carrying in its train the gradual suppression of personal liberty in Greece. In short, Greece was actually "run" by a Court camarilla, of which the most powerful members were, of course, Messrs. Streit, Dousmanis, and Metaxas. Behind them stood the General Staff of the army—a bevy mostly of German-trained soldiers so soused in the vicious virtues of Prussian Militarism that they cherished a belief in the prowess of German arms probably unshared by the Kaiser himself. In addition, they were well aware that every Teuton triumph would drive Venizelos farther from office, while, conversely, every Entente victory would automatically transport him nearer to the Premiership. The Staff, indeed, occupied an increasingly important place in the national life. Members of the Cabinet and leading organs of the Press alike were brought under its influence, and Dousmanis himself burnt his boats by proclaiming that an absolutist *régime* was the only suitable form of government for the army and the State. Thus the foreign policy was governed by a mixture of fear and admiration of Germany, while at home the dominant influence in the out-

look was anti-Venizelism. Perhaps the latter was the more powerful factor of the two.

Events themselves played more or less into the hands of the anti-Venizelists. Entente diplomacy was not a conspicuous success, personal relations between the Foreign Minister and the Entente diplomats became increasingly unpleasant, and if M. Skouloudis wavered in his "General Staff" policy, he was goaded into action by the tenor of Entente Notes or his antipathy to one or more of the ministers who presented them. But since Greece was the weaker vessel, it was obvious that the Premier was steering for the rocks. At home, the aimless maintenance of the army in a state of general mobilisation, the inefficient administration of the country, the growth of corruption, and the suppression of personal freedom gradually undermined his position. Abroad, his constant differences with the Entente and a tactless handling of delicate situations gave birth to a suspicion that the neutrality of Greece had not only been stripped of its benevolence, but was being exploited in the interests of the Central Powers.

Simultaneously, there set in an era of persecution of all opposition to the ruling caste. I doubt whether personal liberty was ever subjected to greater restrictions in any modern autocratic State. The days when King Constantine used to perambulate freely in the streets of his capital became a memory, and now the signal for the approach of his automobile would be the sudden appearance

of dozens of gendarmes who cleared the roads and held them against intrusion. From the General Staff offices in Academy Street, General Dousmanis directed a system of control by spies, secret police, and gendarmerie which counted Venizelism the greatest form of treason, and mercilessly dragooned the public into submission. When George Melas, the last remaining Venizelist official at Court, was forced to resign his office at the end of 1915, he was caught in the military net and banished to the backwoods behind Kavalla. To suggest that the Royal policy was wrong was considered *lèse-majesté*. Traps were laid for unsuspecting people known to share the Cretan's views, and they were ruthlessly shadowed in the cafés and theatres and charged with trumped-up offences. The army officers were moulded into a military caste which recognised no law save the Royal will, and double pay made the process attractive. The troops were incited against Venizelos, permitted to read no newspapers but the anti-Venizelist Press, and granted frequent leave to go and visit their families—starving because, so the men were told, the "traitor" or the "opportunist," as he was variously called, had mobilised the bread-winners!

Every rotten device was employed, and King Constantine's personal popularity was shamelessly exploited with a view to establishing a State organised on Prussian lines on which the Court camarilla could batten without let or hindrance from such interfering nuisances

as Eleutherios Venizelos. Whatever reasons were available in support of neutrality, there was certainly no justification for the methods adopted for the suppression of Venizelism. I once told King Constantine that the Liberal leader was too big a man to be kept under, and I think I was right. He might as well have tried to stay the incoming tide with handfuls of quicksand.

History may reveal whether the adoption of a more sympathetic diplomatic action towards the King would have led him to regard intervention in a different light. We do not know, for we put forward no effort in that direction. Rather did our action, applied to such a stubborn character as that with which the Greek ruler has been endowed, tend to make matters worse instead of better. I have the idea that Constantine prefers hard punches to pinpricks. We used pins exclusively.

On his part, M. Venizelos waited on, cheered by the devotion of his followers, gladdened by the daily influx of Allied reinforcements at Salonika, and angered by the manner in which the vital interests of his country were being jettisoned by inefficient diplomacy and a failure to grasp the essentials of the Balkan situation. He did not wish to precipitate a crisis which he foresaw might conceivably end in civil war, and he was ever hopeful that the awakening even of his bitterest opponents would follow any Bulgarian aggression against Greece. In this respect he was disappointed, for when, on March 14th, 1916, Bulgarian

forces invaded Hellenic territory at four different points, the Cabinet accepted the development with suspicious toleration. M. Venizelos was then roused to the necessity for active in place of passive resistance, and he at once set out on a campaign with the twofold object of restoring constitutional government and safeguarding the national possessions. He made an immediate attack against the suppression of freedom, individual and collective. Against the restriction of personal liberty he wrote:

"The methods of action employed by the so-called Secret Police Service, which is in fact only a Service of ignoble spying, are becoming a positive nightmare. This Service has orders to follow every political person who is not in favour of the Government, and every calumniated citizen is placed under the supervision of the organs of this Service and of those who guide and inspire them. Openly in Athens there has been established an odious system of inquisitorial spying, employing methods which recall a period when State and authority were alike in decadence and governed by barbarian ideas."

In favour of the threatened liberty to hold public meetings, and in reference to deplorable scenes which had been enacted at a Liberal manifestation, he protested as follows:

"We are face to face with a new *coup d'état*

which completes those already accomplished by a Government which has been established and which exists unconstitutionally. It was quite natural that the despotism which governs us, after having trodden underfoot, without the least respect, the rights of a legitimate and sincere national representation in order to replace it by a phantom Parliament representing only the minority of the people, should in addition dare to destroy those citizen rights upon which popular control of Government actions is based. . . . Is not the interdiction of public political meetings the chief characteristic of absolutist tendencies ? "

He was under no delusion as to the consequences of the Bulgarian invasion of Greece :

" The pre-revolutionary people (*i.e.* anti-Venizelists) desire that the Germans and the Austrians, with the Bulgars and Turks, shall invade Macedonia and drive the Anglo-French armies from Salonika. At the moment . . . we simply point out that if the situation develops in accordance with the desires and wishes of the Government, the supremacy of Bulgaria in the Balkans will become definite, and that Greece will be hemmed in, over the length of her continental frontier, by a Bulgaria which has re-established that same superiority over us that she possessed before 1912."

But it was against the unconstitutional or

despotic *régime* that he turned the full force of his fury, as will be noted from the following extracts from his writings:

"The politicians who were condemned by the Revolution (of 1909), tossed temporarily to the surface by the anti-constitutional tempest which has been let loose, are attempting to fight against the general and national interests and against the national political idea because they wish to bury them.... We know, however, that the Hellenic nation—the post-revolution nation—must not, and certainly will not, permit its national work to be overthrown. This section of the nation is in great majority; and although this majority is not represented in the Chamber, it nevertheless lives outside of it, guarding its constitutional rights in their entirety, and with a profound appreciation of the national obligations which are incumbent upon it.

"We contest the right of the Throne to have a personal policy which it seeks to impose on the nation without taking account of the legally manifested opinion of the people. For the Hellenic nation cannot admit to-day, after a history of so many thousands of years, that its future shall depend upon the opinion of a man who owes his position to an accident of birth, and who is generally under the influence of a narrow and not always worthy entourage. It prefers to work out its own destiny in accordance with its own opinion, manifested as the result of discussion between

political parties organised and directed by those placed at the head of its political movement by the free choice of an entire nation of thousands of souls.

"We were aware that the monarchy which governs us had not hesitated to ally itself with anarchy, and thus to compromise public order. But we never imagined that it would have so clearly proclaimed that the only factors capable of solving the great political problems which are preoccupying the nation are, on the one hand, an arbitrary monarchy and, on the other hand, a revolutionary anarchy.

"The Greek nation believed that by combining its democratic *régime* with the institution of a Royal dynasty, it had created an authority which would safeguard the regular working of the *régime*, so that the responsible ruler should never abuse his power by exercising it in opposition to public opinion—an opinion which the Crown has the right and even the duty to obtain, and having obtained it, to submit to it and guarantee its execution.

"The system which governs us has made short work of all that. Like the international treaties of European States, our Constitution has become 'a scrap of paper.' The King, who was invited to occupy the supreme place in the State by no other factor save the free choice of the people, can, according to his own opinion, judge on each occasion whether the constitutional *régime* is to be applied or not. If he fears a rising of the people, he must

respect it. If not, he can simply tread it underfoot!"

In the passages cited above, M. Venizelos indicated his internal policy in clear and unambiguous language. He demanded the restoration of real constitutional government and the abolition of the "personal policy" with its plague of ubiquitous gendarmes, spies, and *agents provocateurs*. He was no less definite in his attitude towards the new developments in the Balkan Peninsula. He considered the danger which threatened the national integrity so great that he relegated the question of future aggrandisement to second place. He saw Bulgaria, the arch enemy of Hellenism, installed at Monastir, Ghevghelli, and Doiran, the strategical points which directly menaced Greek Macedonia, and it became evident that the descent of King Ferdinand's forces into the Drama-Kavalla provinces was merely a matter of time and strategy. The national aspirations of Hellas were also threatened with ruin. Commenting on the policy which had rendered possible this catastrophe, M. Venizelos wrote:

"Whereas, prior to the Balkan wars, Bulgaria's position towards Greece from the point of view of population and wealth was as 6 to 4, and from the point of view of military organisation as 6 to 2,—after the treaty of Bucharest this analogy was destroyed, a complete equilibrium having been re-established as

regards population and wealth,—Greece was able, from the first year following the conclusion of peace, to double her military force, so that in 1918 it would have exactly equalled that of Bulgaria.

"This real balance of power constituted the only true guarantee of the national future of Greece. But the equilibrium is neither maintained nor assured by the policy which is being followed. This policy, even if expectations are realised,—we do not include in these hopes the idiotic ideas based on the cession of Cyprus and the Dodecanesus to Greece, a cession which presupposes the naval defeat of England, which even the most visionary Germanophiles dare not expect—this policy, we say, having already promised Bulgaria the annexation of sixteen new provinces and twenty-four departments, has radically overthrown the balance and replaced Bulgaria in the same position towards Greece as that which existed before the Balkan wars."

. . . . .

Although, as we have indicated throughout the preceding pages, M. Venizelos's protests against the personal policy of the Crown gradually rose in a crescendo until his patience was wellnigh exhausted, his great desire was to avoid an open rupture. He entertained little optimism in January 1916, when, in the course of one of our conversations, I casually informed him of my intention to submit a Memorandum to King Constantine; but he

then told me that if I found reason to think that His Majesty was prepared to co-ordinate his policy with Hellenic interests, he (Venizelos) would suspend criticism in order to facilitate the operation.

And again on June 1st, when the facts before him left him in little doubt that the Greek Staff were working hand in glove with the Germans, he declared to me with obvious sincerity: "My whole anxiety is for my country. I do not want to return to power. I have said so plainly on more than one occasion, and I repeat to you now that I am ready to accept any mission abroad that they may charge me with in order that I shall not be a hindrance to a change of policy."

So he waited on until the last, protesting against despotism, upholding the people as the supreme arbiters of the national will, lamenting the sacrifices of the present and the loss of the future, ever hoping against hope that the mists would roll away, until he became convinced eventually that only by placing himself openly at the head of the national opposition to the Royal policy could he save his country from practical obliteration.

Note.—The reader will understand that the letters to King Constantine and Dr. Streit, from which quotations have been made in this chapter, were written in connection with discussion of the situation from a Hellenic point of view. They were part of a personal correspondence, and had no connection whatever with the diplomacy of the Allies. The extracts have been included simply for the purposes of explanation.

CHAPTER IX

THE INTERVENTION OF THE PROTECTING POWERS

WHILE the Allies continued to strengthen their position in Salonika to such effect that even the Greek General Staff jettisoned its prophecies that the Anglo-French armies would be driven into the sea, M. Venizelos saw the Hellenic Government drifting farther and farther from intervention. The absolute necessity of restoring Serbo-Greek friendship had been a source of much thought to him, and all his anxiety was aroused when proposals were put forward by the Allies to use the Greek railways for the transport of the Serbian army from Corfu to Macedonia. He probably saw, as did many of us, that an opportunity was thus presented to wipe out part of the old stain, and he looked on with scarcely concealed emotion, trusting that the desired facilities would be granted. A demand was first made by the Anglo-French Governments during the first half of April 1916, and was met with a somewhat evasive reply from the Greek Government. This attitude was apparently adopted with a view to gaining time,

for the opposition to the scheme gradually increased until it became obvious that the relations between the Entente Powers and Greece were being subjected to very considerable strain. The various objections raised by M. Skouloudis were as follows:

1. That the transport of Serbian troops over Greek railways would constitute a violation of Greek neutrality.

2. That it was incompatible with Greek sovereignty.

3. That it would arrest the commerce of the country by stopping the circulation of passenger and goods trains over the lines.

4. That it would constitute a danger to the public health.

In addition to this, M. Gounaris, Minister of the Interior, made use of his administrative ability to work up a national agitation against the scheme, and the General Staff laid the foundations of a new Military League which was, if necessary, to oppose the application of the measure by force.

It was when relations between the Entente Ministers and M. Skouloudis had become very critical that the Serbian Government, desiring to avoid an open breach with Greece, felt that the matter might possibly be arranged with greater facility as the result of direct Serbo-Greek negotiations. A proposal in this regard was made and accepted by the Entente Governments, and M. Baloukditch, the Serbian Minister in Athens, was instructed to open *pourparlers*. M. Skouloudis advised him that

the Government were considering the proposition; King Constantine himself offered three objections:

1. That Germany had advised him that it would be considered a hostile act.

2. That it would give rise to internal complications, and

3. That the "landing of French gendarmes" might lead to an occupation of Greece.

At the same time he seemed to be desirous of leaving the door open for further negotiations and sent a message of goodwill to Prince Alexander.

If any intention of coming to an amicable arrangement *had* existed in the minds of the Greek authorities, it soon gave way to a determination to resist at all costs, for on April 25th M. Skouloudis advised the British, French, and Serbian Ministers that Greece would not accept the proposition, and laid great stress upon the protestations which had been received from all parts of the country and the complication of the internal situation which would be created.

Now the important point of the failure of these negotiations is that it destroyed all immediate hope of bringing about a Greco-Serbian reconciliation. Had the Greek Government demonstrated on this occasion any intention to act in accordance with the spirit of the Greco-Serbian Treaty, an easy way would have been opened for Greek intervention. If the *démarche* had succeeded, the principle of

direct negotiations between Greece and Serbia might with advantage have been extended. The French and English Governments might have been requested to permit Greece to base her intervention on the old Greco-Serbian Treaty (nominally still in force) with the provision of a new Military Convention. This would have provided sufficient international justification and have saved the *amour propre* of King Constantine, who was by this time at loggerheads with Entente diplomacy.

We may imagine that some such idea as this was also held by M. Venizelos, for he forthwith made a very smart attack in the *Kyrix* upon the Government's attitude. In reply to the Government's first objection he pointed out that, according to a formal clause of the Greco-Serbian Treaty, every time that one of the signatories was engaged in war against another State, the other party to the agreement was engaged to maintain an attitude of benevolent neutrality and also obliged to mobilise 50,000 men in order to facilitate the movements of its ally.

The second objection was refuted by recalling that the Serbian army was a friendly army and that it would be easy to arrange for it to avoid Athens and continue the journey by disembarking at Ithea and marching across country to Brallos, where a junction could be effected with the Larissa railway. He countered the pretended interruption of the normal circulation of trains by pointing out that on the Brallos-Larissa line only three trains per

day were running, while the line had a capacity for twelve trains. Finally, he quashed the argument based on the danger to public health by the obvious rejoinder that the health of the Serbian troops was in every respect excellent.

A further and very pertinent argument was contained in his assertion that since Greece had declared that she would permit the Bulgarians, Austrians, Germans and Turks freely to enter her territory from the north, from whence they could take Salonika, it was difficult for her consistently to refuse the entry of an Allied army from the south.

This brought against the Cretan statesman all the big guns which anti-Venizelism could bring into action. He was once more accused of being in the pay of the Entente Powers and of assisting them in their attempts to humiliate the Greek State, whereas it will be perfectly clear to the reader that his whole attitude was dictated by a desire to restore friendly relations between Greece and the Entente and keep open the pathway to intervention.

. . . . .

The storm created by the question of the transport of Serbian troops had scarcely subsided when Europe was startled by the surrender of the Greek fortress of Rupel to the Germano-Bulgarian army.

This was an event of very great importance. It marked, so to speak, the lengths to which King Constantine was prepared to go rather

than incur the displeasure of Germany. If one set out to analyse the Monarch's attitude to the Great War, one would have to admit that numerous encroachments upon his sovereignty by the Allies had given him cause for considerable annoyance; but on the other side, it would need to be pointed out that they had never subjected him to such humiliation as was entailed by the surrender of Rupel. And yet, while he openly manifested his indignation against Britain and France and protested against the presence of Italians in Epirus, he stoically accepted insult from his hereditary enemy. Moreover, although he was assured that the Allies would retire from Salonika when their work was finished, he attached so little importance to Germano-Bulgarian promises that the ultimate necessity of driving out the Bulgars was one of the reasons why he desired to remain neutral and preserve his forces intact until the end of the war.

This one act of Bulgarian aggression held more serious consequences for Greece than if the whole of the kingdom had been overrun by the Anglo-French armies. There are only two roads into Eastern Macedonia from Bulgaria (Derbend and Xanthie), and of these the Derbend route is the most vulnerable. Now it was this fact that led the Greek Staff to insist at Bucharest upon the cession of the heights of the Derbend pass, and, to protect it against invasion, they constructed at Rupel an imposing and almost impregnable fortress.

Its surrender placed the Bulgars in possession of a work of vital strategical importance, allowed them to dominate the Struma plain, left them free to advance on Seres, and isolated the Greek army corps in the Drama-Kavalla provinces from communication with Salonika. The surrender materially enhanced the difficulties of Greek intervention. From the point of view of the Allies it blocked the way of advance on Sofia *via* the Struma valley—in which, be it admitted, General Sarrail had thus far shown but little interest—and at one blow destroyed the value of the superiority which had accrued to our Macedonian forces by the arrival of the Serbian army.

The occupation of Rupel took place on May 26th, 1916, and on June 5th M. Skouloudis, with his tongue in his cheek, "explained" the occurrence. He alleged that in accordance with instructions which had been given them the Greek garrison opposed the incursion by firing twenty-four cannon shots at the invaders. The Germano-Bulgars then arrested their march and the German commander notified the Greek commander that he would occupy the fort by force. Upon this the Government, in order to avoid bloodshed (the twenty-four shells had inflicted no casualties!) gave the order to retire, when a German officer named Thient took possession of the fort. The Greek Government then protested at Berlin. M. Skouloudis asked the Chamber to believe that no previous accord existed between the German and Greek

Governments, and concluded with a declaration that the Germano Bulgar invasion threatened neither the integrity nor the interests of the country ![1]

The damage to Hellenic interests resulting from this act of suicidal folly decided M. Venizelos to throw down the gauntlet. He had long harboured an uneasy suspicion that the Greek General Staff was playing into the hands of the Germans, and this last incident provided him with ample confirmation. On June 1st I found him literally seething with indignation and engaged upon an article entitled "The National Curse," which he published in the *Kyrix* on the same day as M. Skouloudis made his misleading statement to Parliament. In this article he held that the Government's action had proved that it was no longer observing an attitude of benevolent neutrality, and that, on the contrary, it had practically become an ally of Germany, Turkey, and Bulgaria. The Government, under the thumb of the General Staff, had clearly manifested in which direction its sympathies lay; it had sought to create difficulties for the Allies in Macedonia, and with the connivance of the Staff it had handed over Fort Rupel to the enemies of the Entente armies.

Leaving aside the direct accusation of active pro-Germanism which M. Venizelos laid against

[1] The suggestion that this occurrence had taken the Cabinet by surprise was, of course, a perversion of the truth, for one of M. Skouloudis's mentors admitted to me a few days later that there had been "preliminary negotiations."

the General Staff, it must be admitted that the suspicions aroused by the refusal to permit the passage of the Serbian army through Greece and the readiness to surrender Rupel were increased by the manner in which these two questions were handled by the Cabinet.

The contrast was striking. When the Entente requested the use of the Greek railroads for the transport of the Serbian army, M. Skouloudis freely disclosed the trend of negotiations, provoked meetings of protest up and down the country, permitted the Government Press to fire the indignation of the nation, and wound up the pyrotechnic display by declaring that Greece would fight the Grand Alliance sooner than concede the point at issue. But when the Germans manifested a desire to seize the Greek fort of Rupel, the Government held secret the preliminary *pourparlers*, presented the country with a *fait accompli*, stifled what explosions of public opinion were threatened, and, though the development menaced the very spirit of Hellenism with annihilation, hastened to assure the people that any humiliation was preferable to war. To be ready to fight the sponsors of Greek independence rather than permit the use of the railways by the army of an ally, and yet to hand over the key to Macedonia to an hereditary enemy rather than oppose even diplomatic resistance *à l'outrance*, conclusively demonstrated that M. Skouloudis's understanding of the obligations of benevolent neutrality was sadly at variance with the generally accepted interpre-

tation of the phrase. However honourable may have been his intentions, his actions were flagrantly liable to misconception.

The mentality which permitted the Greek Government to "stomach" the Bulgarian occupation of Rupel—an incident loathsome to any Hellene worthy of the name—may be summed up as a mixture of fear of Germany (which had developed to such an extent that it can only be fittingly described by the schoolboy idea of "funk"), combined with a determination to cling to neutrality as the only alternative to a policy which might conceivably involve the return of Venizelos to power. Herein lay the genesis of the civil devotion to neutrality, the military conception of Teuton triumph, the superficial atmosphere of pro-Germanism, and the sacrifice of Greek irredenta. When they cried "Down with war," they really meant "Down with Venizelos." When they said that the Germans were winning, they really expressed their belief, or rather hope, that Venizelos was losing. Skouloudis clung so long to office for little other reason than to keep Venizelos out; and the King was dragged into the political arena because he alone in Hellas could be measured with the Cretan.

The surrender of Rupel was also a direct menace to our Macedonian armies. It permitted the Bulgarians to shorten materially their line of defence, and to bring their left wing right down to the banks of the Struma river. This, perhaps inevitably, led to reprisals by General Sarrail, and on June 3rd he

proclaimed martial law in the districts occupied by Anglo-French forces. This action was followed on June 6th by the "holding up" of Greek maritime commerce, sea-borne traffic being entirely arrested by the warships of the Allies, which conducted all Hellenic shipping found upon the high seas and in territorial waters into certain ports under Anglo-French occupation. This measure occasioned much criticism in Greece, most of which would have been avoided had an explanation been vouchsafed to the people. This, however, was not forthcoming until June 21st; and once again Entente diplomacy was used as a weapon against Venizelism.

. . . . .

On June 12th the several attempts which had been made by unruly partisans to terrorise the Liberals culminated in a series of disorders such as have rarely, if ever, disgraced the city of Athens. Immediately after King Constantine had returned from a military fête at the Stadium, I was attracted by a crowd composed of a couple of hundred youths and roughs who, headed by one Douphas—a notorious street-corner orator who leads a precarious existence—made their way to M. Venizelos's house, where they treated the Liberal leader to a chorus of groans and hisses. Retracing their steps to Constitution Square, Douphas harangued his followers, the while a bevy of soldiers looked on in sullen silence and the respectable citizens remained in their seats at the cafés.

Thus incited, the mob visited in turn the offices of the various Venizelist newspapers and riddled the windows thereof with stones, obviously carried in readiness. Outside the bureau of the *Nea Hellas* revolver shots were discharged—fortunately without untoward result—when, having accomplished this patriotic duty to their satisfaction, the crowd dispersed.

The incident supplied a fitting illustration of the lawlessness permitted in contemporary Athens—always provided that it was directed against the Venizelists. Decent citizens were frankly disgusted by the performance, and for the Government organs to attempt to present such a manifestation as a demonstration of indignation against Venizelos was the height of absurdity. The real significance of the occurrence was to be found in the facts that the mob was led by gendarmes, and that the military patrols which had crawled, crab-like, about Athens for six months, mysteriously disappeared on the sole occasion when they might have justified their existence.

These demonstrators, like the *revue* artists who nightly insulted the Entente, and the *claque* who cheered the German military attaché on King Constantine's "name day," were, of course, the hirelings of Baron von Schenk, and the studied connivance of the authorities in these base manœuvres was tantamount to direct appreciation.

On June 21st, 1916, after days of suspense, the blow fell that sent the octogenarian Skouloudis back to the enjoyment of unofficial

tranquillity. On the afternoon of that day the Ministers of Britain and France visited the Greek Foreign Office, and, in the absence of the Premier, handed M. Politis, the Director-General, a Note signed by the representatives of the three Protecting Powers. That historic document ran as follows:

"Upon the order of their Governments, the undersigned, Ministers of France, Great Britain and Russia, representatives of the Powers protecting Greece, have the honour to communicate to the Greek Government the following declaration, which they have also been instructed to make known to the Greek people. As they have already solemnly declared and stated in writing, the three '*Puissances garantes*' of Greece do not request that she shall abandon her attitude of neutrality. They give definite proof of this by placing in the forefront of their demands the complete demobilisation of the Greek army, in order to assure tranquillity and peace to the Hellenic people. But they have numerous and legitimate motives for regarding the Greek Government with suspicion, as its attitude towards them is in conformity neither with its reiterated engagements, nor even with the principles of a loyal neutrality. Thus it is that it has too often favoured the activities of certain foreigners who have openly worked to mislead the opinion of the Greek people, to lead astray the Greek national conscience, and to create on Greek territory organisations

hostile to the neutrality of the country and tending to compromise the security of the naval and military forces of the Allies.

"The entry of Bulgarian forces into Greece, the occupation of Fort Rupel and other points of strategic value, with the connivance of the Hellenic Cabinet, constitute a new menace for the Allied troops, and one which imposes upon the three Powers the obligation of demanding immediate guarantees and measures.

"On the other hand, the Greek Constitution has been disregarded, the free exercise of universal suffrage impeded, the Chamber has been dissolved for the second time in less than a year in spite of the definitely expressed will of the people, the electors have been convoked at a time of complete mobilisation, so that the existing Chamber only represents a fractional part of the electorate; the entire country has been subjected to a *régime* of pressure and police tyranny and left to ruin, in defiance of the legitimate observations of the Powers. These latter have not only the right, but it is their duty to protest against such violations of those liberties which they are entrusted to preserve for the Greek people.

"The hostile attitude of the Hellenic Government towards the Powers who freed Greece from foreign rule and assured her independence, and the obvious collusion of the existing Cabinet with their enemies, give them additional reasons for acting with firmness in basing their action upon the rights established by treaty, and which have been invoked for

the protection of the Greek people whenever the free exercise of their rights or the enjoyment of their liberties has been threatened.

"As a consequence, the '*Puissances garantes*' of Greece find it necessary to demand the immediate application of the following measures:—

"1. The absolute and total demobilisation of the Greek army, which must be reduced to its peace footing with the least possible delay.

"2. The immediate replacement of the actual Ministry by a business Cabinet, having no political colour, and offering all necessary guarantees for the loyal application of the benevolent neutrality which Greece has engaged herself to observe with respect to the Allied Powers, and also for the genuineness of a new reference to the electorate.

"3. The immediate dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies, followed by new elections, to be held after the expiration of the delay necessary under the Constitution, and after the general demobilisation shall have restored the electoral college to its normal conditions.

"4. The replacement, by arrangement with the Powers, of certain police officials whose attitude, inspired by foreign organisations, has facilitated the persecution of peaceable citizens as well as the insults directed against the Allied Legations and persons appertaining thereto.

"Always animated towards Greece by the most benevolent and amicable sentiments, but

decided at the same time to obtain without discussion or delay the application of these indispensable measures, the '*Puissances garantes*' cannot do other than throw upon the Greek Government the entire responsibility for any events which may come to pass if their just demands are not immediately accepted.

"(*Signed*) GUILLEMIN.
F. ELLIOT.
DEMIDOFF."

At length, after a fortnight of weary and often hungry waiting, the Greek people learned why they had been blockaded. M. Skouloudis, dismayed alike by the terms of the communication and the appearance of an Allied fleet off Phaleron and the Piræus, resigned on the spot, and the King (then in residence at Tatoi) sent Dr. Streit to call M. Zaimis back to Athens and the Premiership. In the face of definite action, the surrender was complete, and on June 23rd M. Zaimis handed the Powers the following reply:—

"M. Zaimis, President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs, has taken note of the collective Note of the Ministers of France, Great Britain and Russia by the order of their Governments addressed on the 21st of this month to his predecessor M. Skouloudis, by which these Powers state that they find it necessary to demand the immediate application of the following measures:—

"1. The absolute and total demobilisation of

the Greek army, which must be reduced to its peace footing with the least possible delay.

"2. The immediate replacement of the actual Ministry by a business Cabinet, having no political colour, and offering all necessary guarantees for the loyal application of the benevolent neutrality which Greece had engaged herself to observe with respect to the Allied Powers, and also for the genuineness of a new reference to the electorate.

"3. The immediate dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies, followed by new elections, to be held after the expiration of the delay necessary under the Constitution, and after the general demobilisation shall have restored the electoral college to its normal conditions.

"4. The replacement, by arrangement with the Powers, of certain police officials whose attitude, inspired by foreign organisations, has facilitated the persecution of peaceable citizens as well as the insults directed against the Allied Legations and persons appertaining thereto.

"M. Zaimis has the honour to inform the Ministers of France, Great Britain and Russia that the Royal Hellenic Government, taking note of their final declaration that 'always animated towards Greece by the most benevolent and amicable sentiments, but decided at the same time to obtain without discussion or delay the application of these indispensable measures, the "*Puissances garantes*" cannot do other than throw upon the Greek Govern-

ment the entire responsibility for any events which may come to pass if their just demands are not immediately accepted,' agrees to carry out in their entirety the aforecited demands."

It remains for us to examine what justification the Entente Powers possessed for this interference in the internal affairs of a neutral country.

Britain, France and Russia have played a great part in the development of modern Greece from the position of a Turkish province to that of an independent kingdom. In the course of assisting her in the fight for freedom and in the provision of rulers, several treaties were signed in which these three nations appear as the Protecting Powers and as the "guarantors" of the Hellenic Constitution. The first evidence of this appears in the Protocol of London of February 3rd, 1830, when each of the three (Britain, France and Russia) retained the right "to guarantee" the clauses relating to the political, administrative, and commercial independence of Greece. Again, on May 7th, 1832, the treaty signed between the Protecting Powers and the King of Bavaria (who by the said act accepted the throne of Greece for the future King Otto) expressly described the little kingdom as an independent monarchical State under the "guarantee" of the three Courts. At a later date (July 13th, 1863) when, after the dethronement of King Otto, we declined the request for an English prince and made a scion of the House of Den-

mark "King of the Hellenes," Greece, under "the guarantee of the three Courts," was referred to as an "independent monarchical and *constitutional* State." But what is perhaps more important is that the dethronement of Otto was the outcome of a Greek revolution which followed upon twenty years of British effort to introduce, so to speak, the British form of limited monarchy into Greece. It therefore follows that the addition of the word "constitutional" had a definite purpose, and that the new dynasty accepted a new obligation towards the Protecting Powers.

These agreements would certainly appear to endow the Protecting Powers with the right to interfere if King Constantine failed to respect the Constitution, and it will be remembered that in paragraph 3 of their Note of June 21st, 1916, they claimed that "the Greek Constitution has been disregarded." If any moral justification were necessary it was to be found in the fact that during the Skouloudis *régime* the Hellenic peoples had been denied those very liberties which they had established as the result of a series of revolutions.

Whatever may be the opinion of international jurists on this question, it cannot be denied that the ultimatum—for such it was—of June 21st cleared the air. A new and freer atmosphere was noticeable in the capital, the population at length understood why they were being subjected to the "partial block-

ade," and while the rabid anti-Venizelists continued to storm and rage, the rest for the most part merely regretted that the application of coercive measures had been delayed for so long. M. Venizelos himself approved of the Allies' action, declaring that it had been received with gratitude by real public opinion, and that not the least of its many benefits was that it had spared the nation the necessity of taking up arms to regain its lost constitutional liberties, and had closed the chasm between the Crown and the people which had been created by a clique for their own personal interests.

M. Zaimis did not delay the execution of the Allies' demands. Numerous changes were made in the personnel of the police, the date for the completion of the demobilisation was set forward to July 31st, and preparations commenced for the impending general elections. The electoral contest of 1916 would have provided one of the fiercest political struggles that modern Greece has known. The Hellenes were, in short, to be asked whether they approved of the foreign policy of M. Skouloudis's Government, or whether they desired the return of an administration so convinced that the welfare of Hellas was bound up in the success of Britain and France that the intervention of Greece would be assured *ipso facto*. That was the clear issue, and if there had been any prospect of the struggle being limited thereto, the election of M. Venizelos by an overwhelming majority would have

been a foregone conclusion. But, as a matter of fact, the issue was not allowed to remain clear. The elements which coalesced to oppose the Liberal party in what promised to be the final combat between the forces of progress and reaction early resorted to such subterfuge, and so exploited the individual weaknesses of the electorate and flooded the land with misrepresentation, that it speedily became evident that a supreme effort would be necessary if the people were to vote for civil liberty, national prosperity, and the aggrandisement of Hellas.

The situation in Greece in the summer of 1916 was so interesting that it is worthy of examination. The events of the Great War had given a new lease of life to the discredited politicians of pre-Venizelist days, and it was a testimony to the strength of the ex-Premier that they found it necessary to cease their old-time bickerings and unite in a common endeavour to retain the sweets of office. There was something Gilbertian in the thought of Gounarists and Rallists working in accord; yet they carved the country up into spheres of influence, and decided to go before the electorate for the first time as a coalition—one might almost say, a united party. It affected them little to find themselves making common cause with the hereditary enemies of their motherland, provided that they might thereby give rein to their personal hatred of Venizelos. Their programme was neutrality in foreign affairs, with, one must presume, a perpetua-

tion of the semi-absolutist *régime* with its spies, *agents provocateurs*, and inefficient administration at home. They early manifested their intention to profit by an illicit exploitation of the King's popularity, an unmanly propagation of the fear of war, a fantastic exaggeration of German prowess, and a one-sided tirade against the humiliation of Greece by the Entente Powers.

Allowing for political sophistry, it must be admitted that the Coalitionists were armed with weighty and vote-catching arguments for an electorate which, though innately intelligent, has not yet been educated up to, let us say, the English conception of international and party politics. While the date of the elections was still unfixed, they immediately got to work and proceeded to bait the peasant with something like the following wily proposition :

"Choose ye between the King, victor of Salonika and Kavalla, and Venizelos, the opportunist who invited foreign armies to invade our land, the traitor who has sworn to destroy the monarchy. Choose ye between bountiful peace and disastrous war, the war that Venizelos desires, and from which the King twice has saved you; war with Germany, Germany the invincible, whose enormous armies have overthrown degenerate France, perfidious England, and barbarous Russia, and who is capable of devastating Greece from Kavalla to Cape Matapan in a few days. Choose ye between Venizelos, the paid agent

of the Entente Powers, who offered Kavalla to Bulgaria and who now seek to dragoon you into war by starvation, and the King, who protects you from the fate of Belgium and Serbia."

And to the reservist went forth the personal appeal :—

"If you want to be dragged from home and family to suffer the hardships of war and even death itself, not for the glory of Greece, but in a vain effort to save the Entente Powers from destruction by the almighty German armies—Vote for Venizelos! But if it pleases you to rest in the bosom of your family, to prosper and live while others court death and ruin—Go then to the urns and blackball Venizelos, the enemy of your King and country. Long like the King!"

The Coalitionists had important allies, principal among which were the ultra-Royalist clique, the new military factor, and the German propaganda. The second of these, the military factor, was, perhaps, the most powerful. Throughout the long period during which the reservists were maintained under arms, the General Staff had succeeded in inculcating into the minds of the soldiers a political conception entirely at variance both with the normal military ideal and the development of the constitutional idea. By a clandestine reversion to the old order of things which was

destroyed by the bloodless revolution of 1909, the army had become a political organisation. Further, the men were inspired with a wholesome dread of war, which, combined with nearly a year of pernicious inactivity under the colours, had served to demoralise them and rob them of that fine and aggressive spirit which led them to victory against Turks and Bulgars. And with the enforced demobilisation the nefarious effect of the anti-Venizelists culminated in the formation of the Reservists' Leagues. There is no possible doubt that these organisations were founded while the men were still under military discipline, and that the regrettable scenes which followed their discharge were the sequence of orders given by the officers. The departure of troop trains from Athens and elsewhere was the signal for loud cries of "Blackball Venizelos"; and not only were these demonstrations repeated at every station and whenever a group of wayfarers was passed, but a like inscription was chalked on the carriages themselves.

The rôle of the ultra-Royalists can well be imagined; and, finally, there was Baron von Schenk. Schenk was prepared to leave no stone unturned to secure the final downfall of M. Venizelos. Success would have been the equivalent of a great martial victory for Germany, and, thanks to his control of 75 per cent of the Athenian Press and practically unlimited financial resources, he was in a position to render the anti-Venizelists very powerful assistance. He was prepared still further to

pollute the political life of Hellas with German gold, and to throw all his admitted ability into the welter of falsehood, intrigue, menace, and persuasion against which the Liberal Party had to fight.

And on the other side there was Eleutherios Venizelos, whose genius had purified Greek politics, relegated the army to its proper sphere as a national non-party instrument, and contributed to the doubling of the kingdom. He was pro-Entente, not from any sordid political motive, but because of his unlimited faith in the ultimate triumph of the Allies, because he admired the principles for which they were battling, and because he believed that the friendship of Britain and France was the manna on which Greece should grow and wax strong. His programme was frankly interventionist, and he coupled with it a demand that the constitutional liberties, for which past generations of Hellenes had bled and died, should no longer be usurped by a King, however beloved for his own sake, and by a pro-German cabal.

It was to be a fight between progress and reaction, between life and death. If the people declared with certain voice that their sympathies, their ambitions, and their interests lay on the side of the Entente, there was yet hope for Greece. But if there was to be any wavering, any tendency to approve the policy of the late Government, then it was indeed to be feared that Greece would be lost. The Liberal Party was confronted with a tremen-

dous task. By clean methods it was called upon to destroy the rotten fabric which had been built up largely by German corruption, and to dissipate the erroneous impressions created by enemy and anti-Venizelist propaganda and bribery.

Looking back on the situation as it existed towards the end of August 1916, there is every reason to believe that the elections would have resulted in a victory for the Liberal Party, when King Constantine would have accepted the verdict of the electorate by recalling M. Venizelos to power. The Cretan was assured of the support of all New Greece, the Ægean Islands, and the Athens circumscription, and he would surely have obtained sufficient suffrage in the rest of the kingdom to render certain a working majority.

Unhappily for the Greeks, however, events moved too rapidly for them. Though King Constantine professed to have received assurances from Germany that the Bulgars would not occupy Drama, Seres, and Kavalla—"scraps of paper" of a very recent date—King Ferdinand's forces now descended and occupied all these towns and commenced a systematic penetration in the direction of Orfano. Thus the whole of the Hellenic territories east of the Struma river soon passed under enemy occupation, and when Roumania intervened—an act that robbed Greek assistance of much of its potential value—the elections were necessarily relegated to the Greek Calends.

CHAPTER X

GREECE IN REVOLUTION

THE Bulgarian advance to the Struma river may have been dictated by an intelligent anticipation of Roumanian intervention and a comprehensible desire to shorten the front opposed to General Sarrail's army, or it may have been merely an attempt to render the Greek elections impracticable. As a matter of fact, it accomplished both objects; but, on the other hand, it roused a section of the Hellenic nation to militant action. However complacently King Constantine may have regarded the inroads of the Bulgarians, whatever confidence the monarch may have reposed in the specious promises of the Kaiser, the Greeks who were threatened with invasion or who, thanks to the occupation of the Allies, were free to give act to their thoughts, saw that little stood between them and the annihilation of the Hellenic ideal. They had to strike or be struck, and they chose to strike.

Once again Salonika was the birthplace of a revolution. The Venizelists in the Macedonian capital, having formed a Committee of National Defence for the purpose of driving

the Bulgar from Greek soil, massed parties of Cretan gendarmes and volunteers who had adhered to the new movement, and, at 4.30 a.m on August 31st, 1916, made a determined but unsuccessful attempt to seize the local barracks. General Sarrail immediately ordered up French troops with a view to preventing further bloodshed (three men were killed as a result of the first fusillade), and the Loyalist soldiers were disarmed and interned in the camp at Zeitunlik, outside the town.

The Committee at once took over the control of the district, adhesions to the movement became frequent, and by September 2nd the success of the almost bloodless revolution was already assured.

This development was immediately followed by the presentation of a further Anglo-French Note at Athens, the terms of which amply explain its object. It was handed in on the evening of September 2nd :

" By order of their Governments the undersigned Ministers of France and Great Britain have the honour to bring the following communication to the knowledge of the Greek Government :

" 1. The two Allied Governments, learning from a reliable source that their enemies receive information in divers ways, and notably through the agency of the Greek telegraphs, demand the control of the posts and telegraphs, including the wireless system.

" 2. Enemy agents employed in corruption

and espionage must immediately leave Greece, and not return until the conclusion of hostilities.

"3. The necessary measures must be taken against such Greek subjects as have rendered themselves guilty of complicity in the abovementioned corruption and espionage."

These demands were immediately accepted by the Greek Government, and one interesting result was the departure from Athens of the notorious Baron von Schenk.

On September 6th, King Constantine received 157 officers of the Salonika division who had refused to adhere to the revolutionary movement, and seized the occasion to define his attitude toward the objects of the Committee of National Defence. Their (the officers') names, he told them, would be inscribed in history in iron letters, would furnish a most brilliant page in the military annals, and set an unprecedented example to coming generations. In His Majesty's opinion, therefore, loyalty to King was a greater virtue than loyalty to country.

In the meantime, internal disorder rather increased than diminished—the Gounarist Reservist Leagues were much in evidence—and, advancing this as his reason, M. Zaimis tendered his resignation as Prime Minister. This pretext, combined with the fact that the Zaimis Cabinet had only taken office in order to prepare for and supervise the elections, may have been the whole truth. It is more prob-

able, however, that the statesman recognised that the situation created by the intervention of Roumania and the Bulgarian invasion called for a change of policy, and that he was prepared to remain in power and collaborate with M. Venizelos to that end. If this hypothesis be correct, his resignation clearly indicated that the King was definitely wedded to his policy of neutrality.

M. Venizelos still made no sign, and the King's choice fell upon M. Kalogeropoulos, who proceeded to form an anti-Venizelist Cabinet, which, however, contained a majority favourable to intervention—on terms. Though he distrusted several members of this Ministry and had little hope of it, owing to its pro-German traditions, the Liberal leader was, nevertheless, prepared to accord it his support had it demonstrated any readiness to proceed to action. As a matter of fact, though he was never officially recognised by the Entente, M. Kalogeropoulos did put forward a proposal of Greek intervention. Up to the time of writing, the terms of this offer have not been made public, but it is alleged in Entente circles that attached conditions rendered it unacceptable. This may or may not prove to be the case, but the Allies would certainly have been justified in declining any assistance from Greece with the foreign policy of the State still directed by Dr. Streit and the military machine still under the effective control of General Dousmanis and Colonel Metaxas.

If any additional reason, other than those already made clear to the reader, were required to justify this opinion, it was provided by the surrender of the 4th Greek Army Corps to the Germano-Bulgars at Kavalla. The facts are clear. This unit, commanded by Colonel Hazzopoulos, fell back to Kavalla before the Bulgarian advance, and then, faced with the alternatives of being rescued by the Allies or surrendering to the Bulgars, deliberately chose the latter course. Obviously, the Colonel did not act without orders from some higher authority, and this disgraceful betrayal of Hellenic interests reduced the Greek army by some of its finest troops, and handed over to the Bulgarians a booty which M. Venizelos estimated at six batteries of mountain guns, over 2,000 horses, 1,500 pack animals, 55,000 rifles, 150 guns, several millions of cartridges and the impedimenta of an army corps. All this material has been, or will be, turned against British soldiers on the Struma river. It was calculated to complicate seriously the military task of the Allies in the Balkans, and to delay further the already long-delayed attack on the vital Belgrade-Constantinople railway. How far King Constantine was personally responsible we shall, perhaps, never learn, but a few days later he again voiced the theory that the army is responsible to the King rather than to the nation. On September 21st he addressed a new batch of conscripts, and told them in effect that the Greek army consisted of an

armed organisation placed at the personal service of the King, depending entirely upon him, and owing blind obedience to him alone. Obviously referring to M. Venizelos, he described those who offered different advice as "hucksters seeking to commit crime under the cloak of patriotism." (*Reuter's report.*)

That the Cretan statesman himself was now nearing the end of his patience is evident from his declaration made to an American journalist on the same day. Replying to a question as to whether there was any truth in the repeated reports that he was going to Salonika to put himself at the head of the temporary Revolutionary Government, he declared:

"I cannot answer now. I must wait a little while yet and see what the Government proposes to do, before deciding on the course best to adopt in the event of Greece not entering the war. As I said nearly a month ago, if the King will not hear the voice of the people, we must ourselves devise what it is best to do. I do not know what that will be, but a long continuation of the present situation would be intolerable.

"Our boundaries have been invaded; towns, crops, and farms destroyed, and all sorts of horrors enacted. We have had all the financial burden of war in the cost of maintaining a useless mobilisation, and the moral of the Army, which three years ago was at the highest pitch, has been destroyed by inaction, and is now completely gone. Then we had a

victorious army; now we have a beaten one. We even have over an army corps of Greeks held prisoners of war in a foreign country, and already we have paid the Bulgars an immense war indemnity, amounting in military equipment, property destroyed, and loot of the Greek cities occupied, to £8,000,000.

"And finally, we are, perhaps, on the verge of waging, now at last, that war which we have not fought, but have paid for in blood, tears, and treasure.

"If the Germano-Bulgars are successful, certainly all Macedonia is lost to us. You have seen what a guarantee by the Germans and Bulgarians is worth in their written pledge that they would not occupy Kavalla, Drama, or Seres.

"If the Entente Powers are victorious," continued M. Venizelos, "as I profoundly believe they will be, we risk, first, a separate peace between them and the Bulgars, in which the latter may be permitted to retain the Greek territory they have occupied with the consent of Greece. Or, in the event of a complete Allied conquest of Bulgaria, why should the Serbs, for example, return to us, who have not kept our treaty of alliance with them, those parts of Greek Macedonia which they and their Allies have not taken from us, who gave them up without resisting, but which they had reconquered at the point of the bayonet from the Bulgars, to whom we had surrendered them?"

. . . . .

And while the Revolutionary Movement in Salonika continued to make important progress, and to establish itself in so strong a position that the Committee of National Defence was able to despatch a battalion of volunteers to the front on September 22nd, other parts of the country outside the direct control of Athens were seething with discontent. On September 23rd a revolt broke out in Crete, and when it became clear that the crisis in Greece was rapidly approaching a climax, interest centred around the question whether M. Venizelos would elect to cross the Rubicon and put himself at the head of the new revolution.

The world had not long to wait for the answer. Having with great reluctance arrived at the conclusion that the King was indisposed to lead the nation, M. Venizelos decided that he must respond to the appeal of those of his compatriots who were determined to place, if need be, their lives upon the sacred altar of patriotism. His purpose was a purely national one. Whatever the future may have in store, certain it is that in leaving Athens the Cretan still cherished a forlorn hope that the King would ultimately bend his stubborn will, when the Venizelists of Macedonia, of Epirus and the Islands would have rallied round the Royal Standard. He had sought for months to accomplish his purpose without a rupture, only to find himself thwarted at every turn and Greece threatened with dismemberment. He now rebelled, not against King Constan-

tine, but against the sacrifice of Macedonia and the abolition of personal and constitutional freedom. If any proof of the purity of his motives were necessary, it was supplied by the adhesion to the movement of Admiral Condouriotis, a plain, guileless sailor who is one of the national heroes, who has never at any time allowed his name to be mixed in party strife, and whose personal devotion to the Throne is beyond suspicion.

No longer doubting wherein lay his duty, responding to the call of the Greater Hellas, M. Venizelos decided to go back to Crete. To a mere adventurer the parting would have been easy; but to this man, weighed down by responsibility and care for the welfare of the motherland, it required an earnest conviction, combined with an irresistible determination, to send him out upon a journey which he well knew might plunge his country into civil war. And in those last hours of supreme tension he again unburdened his troubled soul to a British journalist:

"I am leaving here this evening to proceed to the Greek Islands, in order to head the movement which has already manifested itself in some of the Islands in favour of action by my countrymen against the Bulgarian invader, who is overrunning Greek Macedonia, maltreating, taking prisoners, and in many cases murdering those of our countrymen who are left to his mercy, unprotected and undefended by the Greek Army.

"It has long been known that my policy, as head of the Liberal Party, aimed at the intervention of Greece on the side of the Entente Powers against their attacking enemies. I have always maintained that the interests and fortunes of Greece were dependent upon her traditional friendship with the Entente Powers.

"In February 1915, I resigned office, because my policy of intervention was not sanctioned.

"I was returned to power again in August, 1915, as the result of the elections held in June, by which the people approved of my policy. But I was obliged again to resign, because the King did not fulfil our Treaty with Serbia; whereas, even if no Treaty had existed, it was evident to me that the moment Bulgaria joined the Central Powers against the Entente it became an absolute necessity, if only to safeguard the bare interests of my country, that she should immediately join in the ranks of the Entente Powers.

"Subsequently Roumania decided to play her part, and it seemed impossible that we should not then join her against the common foe.

"Nothing was done.

"The betrayal of Kavalla, after the loss of Fort Rupel, Seres, Drama, and of the greater part of Greek Macedonia, has brought matters to such a crisis in the very existence of my country that I can no longer resist the cry of my compatriots calling to me to help them and

save them from extermination at the hands of Bulgaria.

"I can no longer wait.

"I have exhausted in vain every possible means of inducing those who govern Greece to take up arms in defence of their country.

"I have offered to support unconditionally any Ministry in Greece that should be ready to carry out the policy of intervention—the only policy compatible with the national interests of Greece.

"I have recently sent a message to the King, through one of the Ministers of the Entente, urging him to lose no more time in coming to the rescue of his country and offering, should he so desire, to retire myself, if my retirement would make it easier for him to follow the path of duty towards his nation.

"All has been in vain, and I feel myself bound now to respond to the call of my countrymen, the call of those who are oppressed by our hereditary foes, to come and lead them to the rescue of their oppressed brethren.

"I have hesitated to take the supreme step which I am now taking. I am only taking it because I am absolutely convinced—notwithstanding the public assurances that the present official Ministry are disposed to consider the question of intervention—that those who now really control Greek policy do not honestly intend to arm the country and to drive out the invading enemy.

"Do not think I am heading a revolution in the ordinary sense of the word. The move-

ment now beginning is in no way directed against the King or his dynasty.

"The movement is one made by those of us who can no longer stand aside and let our countrymen and our country be ravaged by the Bulgarian enemy. It is the last effort we can make to induce the King to come forth as King of the Hellenes and to follow the path of duty in protection of his subjects.

"As soon as he takes this course, we, all of us, shall be only too glad and ready at once to follow his Flag as loyal citizens led by him against our country's foe.

"Admiral Condouriotis, Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Navy, whose name is honoured and esteemed by Greeks throughout the world, has united with me in the task I am now undertaking.

"I feel sure that we may count on the sympathy and goodwill of the free English people towards us in the mission we are now setting out to accomplish." (*Times*, September 27th, 1916.)

In the early hours of September 25th, M. Venizelos and his entourage embarked for Canea. There was a touch of the dramatic in the departure. Some five miles or so from the Acropolis there is situate the little seaside resort of Phaleron, the summertime rendezvous of Athenian society. It is a sort of miniature Brighton with its hotels and amusements, its sands and its jetty, and the promenade had scarce been cleared of the revellers when a few

automobiles full of muffled figures quietly pulled up at the water's edge. They contained M. Venizelos and Admiral Condouriotis, with Messrs. Negroponte, Repoulis and other leaders of the Liberal cause—all men who had much to lose by exiling themselves from the capital. Few words were spoken as the party descended and made their way to the end of the pier, where they took their places in a waiting launch, and were thus transported to the good ship *Hesperia* which lay in the offing.

Future historians will mark September 25th, 1916, as a milestone in the history of the Greek nation.

M. Venizelos received a tremendous reception on his return to the land of his birth. Cretan soldiers lined the way from the quayside to the barracks, where the local leaders delivered rousing speeches to an immense armed audience, which resolved that a Provisional Government should be formed by M. Venizelos and Admiral Condouriotis with power to appoint a third (General Danglis), and decided that the said Provisional Government should be invested with full authority to organise the forces of the country, with the object of fighting side by side with the Allies against the common enemies.

In like circumstances many a man would have been encouraged to indulge in flamboyant oratory and defiance of the Throne. Yet the great leader's message to the excited throng was a model of simplicity and moderation, which concluded with yet another appeal to

King Constantine: "We hope that the Crown may even at this last moment accede to the will of the nation, so that we may unitedly enter the struggle. But if our wishes meet with no response we promise to devote all our energy to carrying out the mission with which you have charged us."

The Provisional Government installed itself in an unpretentious little inn on the Canea quayside. In such humble circumstances M. Venizelos commenced anew the work of regenerating Greece, of uplifting her from the slough of corruption into which she had fallen, of saving her from utter ruin at the hands of the descendants of Krum the Bulgar, who severed the head of a Byzantine Emperor with his own sword and fashioned a drinking cup from the ghastly trophy. Picture the two scenes! In Crete, Venizelos within the white-washed walls of his humble Government House, surrounded by his devoted band and organising a State that should fight for freedom; in Athens, King Constantine within his palace, defying destiny, with anarchy pervading the countryside, with the streets of his capital ordered by patrols of foreign sailors, and with national unity his for the accepting. Was this the result of a secret pledge of loyalty to Germany? That remains to be ascertained; but there are many indications that Constantine had decided upon war *à l'outrance* against Venizelos, and that his advisers were animated by the same determined hatred of the Cretan statesman. Some of them wished above

all to encompass his political ruin; others were principally desirous of preserving the absolutism of the monarchy. Not only did this intention throw the King and his cabal into sympathy with the antithesis of the Venizelist programme, but the only hope of a successful issue for them now lay in a German triumph. This rendered them very susceptible to bombastic threats from Berlin and inclined to credit the War Lord's professed determination to hold on to the Balkans, even though he might thereby be forced to sacrifice his highest ambitions in Western Europe. They knew that either the return of Venizelos to power, or the establishment by the Entente of a definite military predominance in the Balkan Peninsula, would end the reign of the cabal and might conceivably entail the dethronement of the King himself. They were a band of desperate men, whose only hope of personal salvation was vested in a stalemate in Europe and a Germano-Bulgar hegemony in Balkania.

While the Allies temporised with the situation in Athens and contented themselves with seizing the Greek fleet, railways and telegraphs, instead of insisting upon the restoration of national unity by the appointment of Venizelos at the head of a Government enjoying full executive authority, the "rebel" chief paid a series of triumphal visits to the principal Ægean Islands, and finally, on October 9th, landed at Salonika, where he was received with tumultuous enthusiasm by

his followers. There was nothing in the nature of an official reception by the Allies. No British officers were present; but General Sarrail pushed his way through the crowd and shook by the hand the man whose avowed object it is to provide us with more men to fight a common enemy—the Bulgarian.

As this sketch of the policy of M. Venizelos goes to press, the Greek National Movement has made enormous progress. Although its armed forces must necessarily be composed of men who have had their fill of war, whose houses and families have been ruined by months of pernicious mobilisation, who offer not merely their lives but the welfare of their families—sacrifices much greater than those imposed upon the citizens of any belligerent State—and who risk punishment by accepting, not by evading, military service, it has already provided two army corps to avenge Rupel, Serbia, and Gallipoli. Day by day the Venizelist forces will expand into an army of imposing numerical strength, imbued with a magnificent moral. We must not underrate the value of this new adhesion to our cause. These men who have come forward voluntarily at the call of their great leader are the pick of their race, and I for one am confident that they will prove worthy comrades for our own gallant soldiers as they fight side by side in the cause of freedom, justice and (let me add it since I am writing of the Balkans) the rights of the small nations which are allied to us.

To M. Venizelos himself we owe a great debt.

Through sunshine and shadow he has been our faithful friend and advocate. He stands for those principles which we have made our own. Let us then strengthen his hand, and while benefiting ourselves, permit him, even at the eleventh hour, to save the Greek people from the fruits of a policy which has been thrust upon them, and which, denied the opportunity of exercising the national will, they have thus far been powerless to oppose.

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